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ИИ АУИНОК

# A WANDERING MINSTREL

REMINISCENCES

by

SIR HENRY LYTTON

*Author of  
"Secrets of a Savoyard"*

FOREWORD BY THE RT. HON.  
STANLEY BALDWIN, P.C., M.P.

ILLUSTRATED

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A wandering minstrel I,  
A thing of shreds and patches,  
Of ballads, songs and snatches,  
And dreamy lullaby.

—*The Mikado*



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## FOREWORD

11, Downing Street,  
S.W.1

My dear Henry Lytton,

Once upon a time when all the world was young and Queen Victoria sat upon her Throne, and Beaconsfield was Prime Minister, a small boy might have been seen climbing into the dress circle at the old Opera Comique. He had come up that morning from the remote countryside and was returning to his preparatory school on the morrow. And his one evening with a much-loved aunt was to be a Treat.

He had heard the Grown-Ups at home speak of Sullivan as the Judge in *Trial by Jury*, and of one Grossmith, who was already answering the question, "When shall we see another Sullivan?"

And then had burst upon the world the immortal *Pinafore*, and it dawned on London, and later on the whole world, that the *Sorcerer* and *Trial by Jury* had been but trial runs as it were in anticipation of that amazing series of operas which followed one another for a decade with the riotous prodigality of genius.

But to return to our small boy. What magic casements opened for him that night! As with

faltering hand he writes these words, he hears every note of the exquisite orchestration, and remembers, not without pride, that he picked Dick Deadeye for a wrong 'un, and that he left the theatre uncertain as to whether he would some day be a captain in the Royal Navy or First Lord of the Admiralty.

Alas for the dreams of childhood! The boy has indeed survived to wear on State occasions the uniform of a Post Captain of the reign of William IV, but he has failed to succeed Sir Joseph Porter, nor at his advanced age can he ever hope to do so.

But of what was another small boy dreaming in those days? Now that is exactly what this book is going to tell us, and I for one long to know.

Did he dream of succeeding Sir Joseph Porter? If he did, he indeed, to the full and with measure pressed down and running over, has realized what might have seemed the unattainable.

To you, my dear Lytton, it has been given to interpret to the world for a generation the genius of Gilbert and Sullivan, to preserve and hand on the great tradition of Grossmith, and yet to give each part in turn the stamp of your own delightful and inimitable personality. That is a great work to have accomplished: you are handing on the lamp to your successor as brightly burning as when you received it.

To the artist, that is your pride and your reward. But to the man there is added the thought of the happiness you have brought to so

FOREWORD

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many : the millions who have laughed with you and wept with you. And as one of that multitude, I say this on their behalf :

“May long and happy years lie before you. We shall never forget you. We honour the artist : we love the man.”

God bless you,  
Yours in gratitude and sincerity,  
(Signed) STANLEY BALDWIN

7th June, 1933



# A Wandering Minstrel

## CHAPTER ONE

HERE is the story of my life and travels. I was going to say my autobiography, but that sounds like an ominous threat, doesn't it? I can assure you that you will find between the covers of this volume nothing that is in the nature of a heavy record, for I have written it because, like Jack Point in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, "I have a song to sing-o".

It is a song of the love of life and laughter; for that, looking back over sixty-six years, is how life appears to me, since nearly fifty years of my threescore-odd have been spent in the colourful surroundings of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas. What could have been happier or more enchanting than that? You see, it is with a feeling of appreciation that I settle down to write.

Not that Jack Point—for it is as my most favoured rôle that I like to think of myself—has known nothing but laughter. There can be no sunshine without shadow, and I can recall the days when the scenes were not only shadowy, but black—desperately so. When I think of all the fine experiences I have had at the hands of so many thousands of Gilbert and Sullivan opera lovers it seems almost impossible that there were

other than happy days, but, believe me, there were.

There were those days when I lived in an attic on the south side of the river near Westminster, when my wife and child were both on the point of starvation, waiting hopelessly at home while I roamed the streets wondering where the next penny or the next crust would come from ; days when I delivered handbills from door to door for a few pence ; the day when a Godsend was sixpence dropped into my hat by a dear old lady who thought I was begging ! I was on the point of doing so, but had not actually commenced. I had merely taken off my hat as I stood, weary and footsore, while I wiped a worried brow, wondering what next to do to earn an honest penny. And sixpence dropped from heaven.

Those, incidentally, were the days when a friend, then a penury-stricken actor, but now a very rich and well-known London manager, left me at a street corner and, following me up the road with his eyes, said to himself : "There goes a fellow who will never do any good for himself." He told me years afterwards that that is what he thought about me then.

I can laugh with him about it now. Even my wife—staunch helpmate through fair weather and foul—used to think I should never do much. In fact, we were both of the opinion that it was she who would eventually make a name for herself on the stage and keep the family fortunes at least respectable.

I will tell you all about those times later.

Looking back on them now, even they were not all blue.

There is humour in all things, and the truest philosophy is that which teaches us to find it and make the most of it.

Despite privation and having to worry about the rent, how to get sufficient food, and where to secure a little warmth in winter, my wife and I can recall jokes which we managed to make.

When I invented a rocking cradle for our first child, Ida, for instance. We were so poor that we could not afford a cot, so we used a travelling-basket for this purpose; but the wee tot who had to make do with this improvisation was not too happy about it, apparently.

"She ought to have a pretty cradle with rockers," I commented to my wife, who smiled at the idea. To secure one would have been an impossible extravagance, but I was taken with the idea, and nothing would pacify me until the baby had a rocking cradle. I knew I could not buy one; but I could *make* one, and it was done in a trice! On a wash-hand stand in a corner of the room we had two tin bowls in which we used to perform our ablutions, but they were never very much good for this purpose because they were rounded at the bottom. With a remarkable flash of inventive genius I placed them on the floor, putting the travelling-basket-cot on them, and lo! an ideal rocking cradle.

"You'd better patent the idea," my wife suggested.

She, you see, was the business end of our



partnership in those days. Heaven knows we needed a business end, for, giving up a safe, though not very remunerative job, as a chorister in the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company to "better myself", I had failed dismally.

In addition to being forced to deliver hand-bills, I had tried my hand as a die-maker in Jermyn Street, had a month at a solicitor's in Piccadilly, had joined a company of travelling players with such disastrous results that we had to have our fares given to us to get back to London, and I had, at each venture, become poorer and more hopelessly situated.

In fact, my fortunes did not begin to turn until I rejoined the D'Oyly Carte Company at the Savoy. Even then I only received thirty-five shillings a week for my services, and in order to make ends meet I had to walk to and from the bed-sitting-room in Hampstead, our new home, to the theatre every day.

And then came that never-to-be-forgotten day when I was the envy of the whole chorus. From among them all, I, "young Lytton", was chosen for a part. It consisted of marching on the stage, drawing a sword and arresting King Gama in *Princess Ida*! I smile now when I think of the stride I had made in the profession.

As a matter of fact I had made a remarkably fine stride. I had been sent out with a touring company and was earning another five shillings a week. What days!

Since then I have played King Gama himself hundreds of times. I have played all the leading

rôles, and have visited almost every town, both large and small, in the British Isles ; I have been to America twice and have toured Canada twice, all as a member of the world-famous opera company.

Now, at the point of setting out on my farewell tours, I can, without boasting, I think, look back with pride, recalling that the Prime Minister of England, four Lord Chancellors, and many famous people have so honoured me as to spend their valuable time chatting with me in my dressing-room—the dressing-room of Henry Lytton who once was on the point of begging in the streets ; and who, after many a failure, had been on the point of starvation. To me it seems all too wonderful to be true. No wonder I have a song to sing-o ! It would be a surly and ungrateful knave who had not.

I am not unmindful, I should like to record, of the great honour His Majesty the King conferred upon me when he made me a Knight Bachelor, and it is through no lack of a fitting sense of gratitude due to His Majesty that I failed to mention that distinction first ; rather is it that I feel the honour so undeserved that it is with a fitting modesty I mention it in this cursory way. So great and so appreciated is this signal of the King's graciousness that I intend in a later chapter to deal with it separately, as the distinction of Knighthood upon such a humble person as a wandering minstrel is deserving of a special and particular reference.

Another honour of which I am justly proud

is that of being made an Indian Chief. And that ceremony, too, I shall describe in detail at a later stage in my story. Meanwhile, I must begin to particularize or you will accuse me, justly, of being too much of a *wandering* minstrel.

## CHAPTER TWO

IT is fitting, I think, that I should record the fact that my first appearance on any stage was at some amateur theatricals produced at St. Mark's School at Chelsea, where I was a scholar. I played the part, I remember, of the hotel boots in *The Boots of the Swan*, when I wore a beautiful striped waistcoat with fine brass buttons. I was about twelve years of age, and, I recall, thought much more about the brass buttons than about learning my lines. The consequence was that I got more laughs than was ever intended should be in my rôle; but I really do think it was the fact that I did get some laughs that gave me my first idea how fine it would be to go through life making people laugh.

Whether it was or not, that is what I have tried to do. No matter whom I meet, I try to raise a smile. I think that is a good thing. Only the other day I went up to a station bookstall to buy a paper and found myself facing the most doleful-looking fellow you ever saw.

"Ah, you're married, I can see," I remarked.

"Yeh!" he replied, still with a long face.

"So am I," I told him, "and I've got fourteen blooming kids."

"Blimey!" exclaimed the miserable one.  
"Fourteen!"

"Ye-s," I said, "and that's nothing to laugh at."

Whereupon, human nature being what it is, the fellow did laugh. So did I, and when I left him he was still grinning.

However, that's by the way.

After my success as a stage boots they made me into a girl when my second school production occurred. I took the part of Betsy Waring in *There's Nothing Like Work*. The dialogue in that piece, I recall now, was dreadful, equalled only by the author's terrible sense of rhyming. Two of the lines I had to say were :

My name's Betsy Waring  
I goes out charing.

Could anything be more dreadful than that ?

It was in 1884, when I was seventeen, that I made my first appearance on the legitimate stage, and I am proud to be able to record that it was at the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, in the Gilbert and Sullivan opera *Princess Ida*. I was only a chorister, but I *was* in Gilbert and Sullivan, and had commenced my long and wonderful association with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.

In the same year—as I have already recorded in "The Secrets of a Savoyard"—my wife, the pretty Louie Henri, was then also seventeen, and also playing in the Company. It was through her that I secured my job, on the strength of which we married, although I was still supposed to be a pupil at St. Mark's. For my absence, caused by



“JACK POINT IS MY FAVOURITE ROLE



having to appear on the stage, the headmaster thrashed me soundly, and when I protested that I was a married man, the whacks came faster and more furious! The indignity of it I shall never forget, although it took many long days for the soreness to wear off!

Later on I left the D'Oyly Carte Company. In the interval between then and the time I rejoined them at the Savoy I played at the Criterion, Daly's, the Gaiety, the Lyric, and on the music-halls, but I made no great success, and was glad to get a steady engagement with the Gilbert and Sullivan opera players.

In fact it was just before I rejoined the D'Oyly Carte that my fortunes were at the ebb tide. I had to take my young wife and child to live in one room near Westminster. It was a terrible little attic with broken window-panes, hardly any daylight, and no fire. The only warmth we had, even on bitterly cold winter nights, was the little comfort given by a small oil-lamp used for lighting.

Here my prospects became alarmingly dreadful, and I remember with gratitude that the Actors' Benevolent Fund came to my aid by lending me two pounds, which I gladly repaid as soon as I got work again.

Just before I was forced to borrow the money, I met the friend who, as I have already related, decided that I would never do any good for myself.

I was walking disconsolately over Westminster Bridge, after having been round all the



agents I knew, unsuccessfully trying to find an engagement.

"Hullo, Lytton," said my friend, who looked as dreadfully shabby as I did, "anything doing?"

"No," I told him.

"Well, come and have a drink," he said, feeling more cheerful than I.

I had to explain that I had only a few coppers and could not afford to spend even one.

"That's all I have," he said.

I think we counted just how much we did possess, and it came to one shilling and ninepence between us!

Despite this, he generously offered to buy me a glass of beer and to share a pork pie with me, so I walked into a public house to enjoy his hospitality.

We were both hungry and felt no shame in cutting the pork pie in two in front of the barmaid.

But I remembered my wife. She was hungry also, and when I thought no one was looking I cut my portion in two with a pocket-knife, slipping one portion of the pie into my pocket.

"What are you doing?" asked my host, who, despite my caution, had seen me.

"Taking a mouthful home to my wife," I whispered.

He made no comment, but years afterwards he told me he had pitied me because he thought I was hopeless.

"And, do you know, Harry," he said, recalling

the incident, "when you left me I said, 'Well, Lytton will make a mess of things, but I shan't. I'm going to make money—big money.' I have," he added, "thanks to the determination your sorry appearance put into me."

It is interesting to recall that at this stage of my career my wife had far more acting experience than I had. She was already in the D'Oyly Carte Company, but she could not contribute to the family exchequer much because she had the baby to look after, and had to remain at home.

We laugh together now when, in reminiscent mood, she confesses that her heart was heavy because she thought I never would get a good job and get on. She had seen me trying to act when we were touring with the London Comedy and Operetta Company. That, by the way, was the grandiose name taken by the strolling players who were unable to make enough money to pay their own fares home. My wife, as I say, had seen me trying to act, and she thought it was dreadful! So did some of the audiences, particularly some of the rougher military ones at Aldershot.

Once, I remember, I got stage fright so badly that I forgot my lines. All I could do was to say the first word, which happened to be, "Well."

"Well . . ." I said and stopped. There was silence while I struggled to remember the next words.

"Well . . ." I commenced, and stopped again.

"Well . . ." I began for the third time, when the utterance was met by a huge, overpowering, mighty, "Well?" from the audience. The mass

query from the auditorium put paid to me, and I fled from the stage with fright.

So bad was it that the curtain had to be brought down and some of the company went on afterwards and did some dancing and singing. The play, *Tom Tug, the Water Man*, was not performed that evening.

No wonder my dear wife had no faith in me! What with my personal lack of success, and the failure of the company as a whole, she was more than justified.

The experiences we had were certainly most unfortunate—in fact nothing reminds us of them so much as the wonderful scene of the Gayford Theatre in *The Good Companions*.

My wife and I went to see the play more than once because the experiences of that little company of players were ours in detail.

On many occasions my wife and I have sat in stalls watching the players, and my wife has exclaimed under her breath, "Good gracious! That's exactly what happened to us."

So those of you who have seen Mr. J. B. Priestley's play will know exactly how the London Comedy and Operetta Company, of which I was such a mournful member, fared when it tried bravely to make a fortune.

Now the prologue is over. The scene is set; the lights are down. Come then, ring up the curtain!

## CHAPTER THREE

HAVING been on the stage for half a century, it is inevitable that I have spent many hours of my life—possibly years—in my dressing-room. How many I cannot count, but they have been happy hours, many of which I shall always remember. Particularly do I recall, with pleasure and great appreciation, the number of distinguished people who have done me the honour of coming behind the stage to chat with me, either while I have been making-up or while I have been resting between my appearances during a show. Among these visitors I can count, I am proud to say, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime Minister. He came round to my dressing-room one evening with the Lord Chancellor, Lord Sankey, and Lord Macmillan. It so happened that I was playing the part of the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, and I remember Lord Sankey remarking jocularly :

“There is no doubt about it that Lytton’s Lord Chancellor has given more pleasure to the public than mine has.”

“Undoubtedly !” agreed Mr. MacDonald.

Subsequently Lord Sankey was kind enough to send me a charming letter of thanks, in which he declared :

*Permit one of your most recent understudies to send a great Lord Chancellor very hearty congratulations and his best thanks for a very delightful welcome and a very pleasant evening. Ordinary Lord Chancellors go in and out with their governments, but you are a permanent official. May you long continue to be so.*

Another distinguished Lord Chancellor who paid me a compliment was the late Lord Birkenhead. It was at a dinner at which I was the guest of honour, and when Lord Birkenhead commenced his speech he told the company that he felt very diffident in getting up to speak before his "senior" Lord Chancellor.

"Lytton," he said, "has sat on the Woolsack for over thirty years. I have sat on it only two. I hope," he added, "his Woolsack has not been so stuffed with thorns."

Lord Birkenhead, I think, was one of the most brilliant men I ever met. He made it quite clear on many occasions that he had a surprising facility for grasping a subject about which he knew very little. Had I not realized this before, I should have done so at this particular dinner, for Lord Birkenhead, who was sitting next to me, asked me if I would give him one or two couplets from the Gilbert and Sullivan operas which he could work into his speech. I quoted him one or two short passages. Having heard them for the first time, and without making any notes, he subsequently repeated them perfectly in his speech.

One passage in particular which I quoted to

him and which he repeated some time afterwards, was, I remember :

When I went to the Bar, as a very young man,  
Said I, to myself, said I,  
I'll work on a new and original plan,  
Said I, to myself, said I.  
I'll never throw dust in the jurymen's eyes  
Or hoodwink a Judge who is not over-wise,  
Said I to myself, said I.

I wonder how many people hearing that quotation for the first time could repeat it correctly. Lord Birkenhead not only repeated it correctly, but did so after a considerable lapse of time, and worked it into his speech in a very appropriate and amusing manner. In addition to being a brilliant after-dinner speaker, Lord Birkenhead had a remarkable voice which was extremely emphatic. Incidentally, so has Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, to my mind. It is resonant, and, although very soft, is suggestive of great strength and has the peculiar quality of carrying clearly over a long distance, although he never shouts.

Lord Sankey had visited me in my dressing-room once before the occasion when he came with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Lord Macmillan. He made himself quite at home the short time he was there, I remember, questioning me about my make-up and my wigs. He became very interested in the wig which I wore as the Lord Chancellor on the stage, so much so that he took it up and fitted it on. To his surprise it fitted him perfectly. Lord Sankey and I both have heads of

exactly the same size—seven and a quarter. I have felt more like a real Lord Chancellor ever since Lord Sankey wore my wig!

The late Lord Fisher was also a frequent visitor to my dressing-room. He loved the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, particularly *H.M.S. Pinafore*. The subtlety of Gilbert's satire on "Whitehall sailors" tickled him immensely. He would invariably chuckle, particularly over those clever lines:

Stick close to your desk and never go to sea  
And you all may be rulers of the Queen's navee.

Of course, he also enjoyed the clever and sharply pointed arrows which were shot at politicians.

Among the things I treasure is a signed photograph of "Jackie" Fisher, and when he gave it to me I remember him remarking: "I'm an ugly blighter, aren't I, Lytton?" That was typical of him.

Of course, amateurs often come to my dressing-room to watch me make up and to gather hints when they are going to play a particular Gilbert and Sullivan part. I have always been happy to help them in any way I could, but there was one amateur who, I remember, amused me immensely. It was when I was playing Bunthorne, and this young man was going to play the same character in some amateur theatricals. After he had watched me make up and had asked me all sorts of questions, he said it would be very kind of me if I would spare him half an hour to run through the part with him.

"I should be delighted, my dear fellow," I told him. "Come along home with me and we will run through the part."

He came home and for half an hour there was a rehearsal. But at the end of it, when the young man had gone, my wife exclaimed: "Harry! I was boiling the whole time that fellow was here. You gave up your time to rehearse him in Bunthorne and the whole time he was rehearsing *you*. He did nothing but tell you what he was going to do, and even suggested things you should do."

As a matter of fact, this is the attitude the young man adopted. Once, I remember, he even went so far as to suggest an alteration in the dialogue which I might like to put into the part the next time I played it! I suppose it was natural for my wife to be furious, but, truth to tell, the whole thing rather amused me.

Fortunately, all amateur theatricals are not so strongheaded as this particular young man proved to be. Most of them are anxious and ready to learn, and I find it is very interesting to chat with them and to discover from them their interpretation of some of the most famous Gilbert and Sullivan characters.

The Prince of Wales once did me the honour of visiting me in my dressing-room at the New Theatre, Oxford. It was when he was an undergraduate at Magdalen, and His Royal Highness came to the theatre many times to watch the operas. It was on the occasion of one of these visits that he so kindly came behind the scenes



to visit me in my dressing-room. He is an extraordinarily charming man who, even in those days, when one might have excused him for being something of a thoughtless youth, was always anxious to put everyone near him at perfect ease. On the occasion of his visit, I remember, the whole company was impressed by his charming personality and by the way he made a point of talking to everybody, no matter whether they were principals or not.

Playing in the company as a chorister at that time was a well-known man named Joe Rough. He was a big fellow who always stood at one side of the stage when the chorus was on. The Prince had noted Joe and kindly asked to be presented to him. That is the way the Prince puts a thing. He always wishes to be presented to someone, not to have someone presented to him.

At the conclusion of his visit, His Royal Highness remarked to me: "Come and have tea with me some time, Lytton."

I said I should be honoured to do so, and His Royal Highness added immediately, "Come tomorrow." I went, and had a thoroughly delightful time.

That week at the theatre I happened to be playing the part of Ko-ko, and it was as "Ko-ko" that the Prince addressed me. Soon after I arrived His Royal Highness remarked to his tutor, Mr. Hansell: "The footballers coming to tea this afternoon, are they not, Hansell?"

"Yes, sir," replied the tutor.

"That is the best of being a celebrity, Ko-ko,"

said the Prince to me. "I could not get a muster as large as a football team. They are coming to see you, of course."

That is just the kind of charming thing the Prince of Wales always says to his guests. He has a marvellous knack of saying the right thing at the right time, so as to put you at your ease.

This cannot be said of all celebrities, but it is a characteristic for which the late Lord Oxford was well known. When he was Mr. Asquith I met him many times, visiting him occasionally at Boar's Hill, his place just outside Oxford, but never did I meet Mr. Asquith without wondering at his kindness towards everyone he met. I do not think he could have been unkind, even to foolish people who were in his company. What impressed me particularly about him was the manner in which he would go out of his way to bring out the best that was in you. If you happened to be a little awed or uncomfortable in strange surroundings, he would go to the length of phrasing a question to you in such a way that you had to give a good answer. He always gave you such a chance to show yourself at your best. If you did not take advantage of it, then you could go away satisfied—or dissatisfied, as the case may be—that you were a very dull fellow indeed.

I met him on many occasions. He loved the operas and loved to come to my dressing-room. It was during one of these visits to me behind the scenes that he invited me to his place at Boar's Hill to lunch with him. It was then that I saw some of his wonderful collection of books.

They composed one of the most beautiful libraries I have ever seen. He was, of course, a great collector, and the majority of his books were beautifully and very delicately hand-tooled.

The late Lord Oxford, of course, was also a great wit. It was while we were waiting lunch, talking together in his library, that he made a delightful joke—at least it seemed to me a delightful and a clever one. The sound of the church and the college bells was coming in through the window and I remarked to him on the number of bells in Oxford, all of which seemed to be always ringing.

“Yes, Lytton,” replied my host at once. “Oxford is a very bell-y place.”

As an example of the length to which the late Lord Oxford would go to put anyone at their ease I might recall an occasion when I went hot and cold at a dinner-party at which he and I were guests. Sitting next to him was a very talkative and foolish young lady—a typical Bright Young Thing.

“I suppose,” she chirped at the great statesman, “you must read a great deal, Mr. Asquith?”

“Yes,” Mr. Asquith replied kindly.

“Have you read ——?” asked the Bright Young Thing, mentioning a woman writer of sensationally romantic fiction.

I shuddered when I overheard the question, but Mr. Asquith beamed at her and said charmingly, “Oh yes, I never miss any new books.”

Among my friends I am proud and happy to be able to include Lord Moynihan, the famous



SIR HENRY AND LADY LYTTON AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-ONE



surgeon. He has visited me many times in my dressing-room, particularly when I have been playing at Leeds. In fact, whenever I am playing there I invariably make a point of looking for him in front.

In these days it is easy enough to see over the footlights, but it was not so easy in the early days of my career in the theatre, for I can recall the time when the footlights were composed of gas-jets and all the lighting behind the stage was given by gas. It made the place terrifically hot and full of fumes and in addition to that one looked across the footlights through a shimmering haze of heat so that it was impossible to see the audience. The best one could do was to hope that they were there and to wait for the applause—or what other gesture the audience pleased to make!

On one occasion when I was playing in Leeds I happened to be with Lord Moynihan in his car when the famous surgeon was setting out to visit some of his patients. I noticed that not only was he wearing a pair of meticulously clean white gloves, but that in his car he carried a large packet of them. I was inquisitive enough to comment on this fact, and I discovered that whenever he visited patients he wore a pair of these gloves and changed them immediately after the visit for a clean pair from the supply which he carried round with him in his car.

Lord Willingdon also was so charming as to visit me in my dressing-room on one occasion. That was in London, Ontario, during one of my Canadian tours. Lord Willingdon happened to be

passing through London (Ont.), and, having a short time to spare, he came to see the *Mikado*. That happened to be a very hard part for me to play, because I have many long appearances on the stage and very little rest during a show. Lord Willingdon was aware of this and very kindly remembered it when he mentioned to the manager of the theatre that he would like an opportunity of meeting me.

"Yes, sir," said the manager at once. "Shall I bring Lytton to your box?"

"Oh dear, no," replied Lord Willingdon. "He has been working hard to please us. We must go to him. That is the least we can do."

I also met Lady Willingdon at a Government reception in Victoria. It was, of course, a very stately occasion, with everybody trying to look their best and to be on their best behaviour—in fact, there was quite a little *hauteur* in the bearing of the company. Naturally, being unaccustomed to State ceremonies, I felt rather nervous at going in, but I plucked up courage and marched in as dignified as I could.

Hardly had I negotiated my entry when I heard a voice behind me in the distance exclaim: "My sweetheart!" I stared round feeling rather surprised to hear such a remark in such a company. I was still more surprised, as you can imagine, when I discovered that the exclamation had been made by Lady Willingdon and was directed at me. She came forward with a charming smile to greet me and told me of something

of which I had no knowledge whatever—that I had been her sweetheart for years!

“You do not know it, of course,” said she delightfully, “but I fell in love with you when you were playing ‘the Earl’ in *The Earl and the Girl*.”

It was exceedingly kind of her to make such a jocular remark, because it immediately had the double effect of putting me and everyone within earshot at ease. Happy conversation started at once, and I found that I was joining in without any embarrassment whatever, thoroughly enjoying the occasion.

One of the most beautiful ladies I ever met was Lady Beatrice Pole-Carew, the wife of General Pole-Carew. She, of course, was a famous beauty many years ago when, some of my readers may remember, her engagement to the General was talked about as the match of the season. Not only was she said to be the most beautiful lady in the land, but her young husband was said to be the most handsome man. We were together just outside Plymouth, where is his stately home, and there was a pathetic note about the meeting.

“I cannot take you over the house,” he apologized, “but we can just look through the gates as we pass. I have let it,” he explained, “to some rich Canadian.”

The General was living in the lodge of his own residence.

But from the gates of the mansion he was able to point out many curios and interesting things. “That,” he explained, pointing to a piece in the garden, “is a bell I took from China.



“We have served our country for hundreds of years,” he told me. I felt there was something rather pathetic in the statement and the way he made it.

Since General Pole-Carew died I have had the pleasure of meeting his wife again. She is still a beauty. Wherever she goes people point her out and say how wonderful she is.

While talking of my dressing-room and the happy hours I have spent there, I must not forget to mention an old actor with whom I dressed for twenty years. During the whole of that period never one cross word passed between us. But that was not my old friend’s fault, I am afraid. He was a charming fellow, but took a delight in ragging me, trying always to make me lose my temper.

There was something impish about him which he could not control in this direction. He would do the most annoying and, sometimes, the most amazing things. Perhaps as soon as he entered the dressing-room before the show commenced he would begin to whistle, not a tune, but any jumble of notes that came to his mind, and he would keep up this whistling for the whole evening—at least for every second of it that we were off-stage together in the dressing-room.

On other occasions he would tap interminably on the edge of his table, beating a fearful and annoying tattoo. Another little prank of his, always done deliberately, was to slam the door, hoping, of course, that I would shout out after him. I knew that he was trying to annoy me, so I took the whole matter as a joke, and the more

he racked his brain to try to make me lose my temper the more determined did I become that I would not do so.

No matter what annoying thing he thought of, I just smiled at him as if I was thoroughly enjoying it.

This sort of thing went on—with intervals, thank goodness!—for months. Finally he capitulated. The evening that he gave up his long efforts to annoy me was, I remember, a particularly difficult one for me. He played all his pranks on the one evening, as if in a final onslaught on me. He banged doors, tapped the table remorselessly and whistled the most untuneful tunes in a high-pitched tone. Still I was determined not to give way.

Finally, at the end of the show, he undressed, took off his grease-paint, put on his hat and coat, went out, and slammed the dressing-room door with a terrific slam. I still took no notice, and in a moment the dressing-room door opened, his head poked in suddenly, and he shouted :

“Good night, you affable blighter !”

That was the end of his attacks on me. I had won and forced him to throw up the sponge, but he was a splendid fellow, and we have always been the very best of friends.

Other well-known people who have honoured me by visits to my dressing-room include the Earl of Gainsborough, the late Lord Cave, Sir Ernest Wild, the first Lord of the Admiralty, and the late Sir Alfred Fripp.

## CHAPTER FOUR

IT has been my good fortune to tour Canada twice with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Canada is a beautiful country, and I shall never forget my tours as long as I live. Not only is the country itself wonderful, but so are the audiences. They always seem so delighted when a Gilbert and Sullivan opera is to be played, looking upon it almost as a link with the Old Home Country. Of course, the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are so very essentially English, and I suppose this is one reason why they form a link between the people of Canada and home, for, of course, everyone in the great dominion thinks of England as "home".

My first visit there was seven years ago, in 1926, and I shall never forget setting out from England to make the journey. It was Christmas Eve when we left Liverpool, and there was sadness mixed with the excitement of going to a new country. Anyone who has sailed out from Liverpool knows that the last thing one sees of England is the top of the huge Liver Buildings. When they have gone out of sight, having melted in the mists, England too seems to have gone temporarily. On this Christmas Eve, I remember, all the decks were crowded with people, many of whom did not expect to be coming back. All

of them were watching and waiting, craning to see through the ever-thickening mists the one last glimpse of the great Liver buildings. Everybody always watches them.

At the quayside, before the ship set sail, there had been laughter and cheers, the waving of handkerchiefs to relatives and friends who were being left behind. But long after the friends could be seen no more the lights of Liverpool flickered; then gradually they melted into the mists, and the gigantic building stuck up like a huge rock with everyone on board waiting for the last sign of it to disappear.

But we soon developed into a happy ship. These farewells are always sad, but ship's officers, particularly at Christmas-time, know how to overcome the sadness and replace it with joy in the hearts of everybody. We were on the good ship *Metagama*, and with me were sixty members of the Gilbert and Sullivan Company. On Christmas morning, when we woke up on board, we found that the ship had been cheerfully decorated with flags and the stewards seemed to be buzzing and running about hither and thither all over the deck, bringing wireless messages—Christmas greetings to, it seemed, everybody on board from their friends ashore. Throughout the day we seemed to be in constant communication with the homeland, and it was a very comforting feeling.

The day was not very old before real Yuletide fun commenced. While the last of the arrangements were being made for the day's entertainment, I remember, we were kept in constant

laughter by a dear old gentleman who had crossed the Atlantic many times and had a rich and seemingly endless supply of sea stories. Each time he told one—or so it seemed to me—someone bought him a drink, and he was treated to round after round until I began to wonder how it was possible for anyone to drink so much without becoming unconscious. I was so surprised that I asked a steward.

“Ah, sir, he’s all right,” replied the steward. “He can drink any amount. He’s got hollow legs.” Which caused another good laugh to go round the company.

I, ready to contribute what little I could to the general gaiety on such an occasion, accepted a suggestion that I should act as Father Christmas. But I was a queer Father Christmas, I am afraid, for instead of wearing a red cloak and hood and a flowing white beard I was dressed up as a chef and put into a huge pie. The pie was put on a trolley, and the scheme was to wheel it into the middle of the assembled ship’s company, cut a slice off the pie to allow me to emerge, and then for me to distribute a gift to everyone on the ship. The idea went very well so far as the company was concerned, but not too well for me at the beginning because of a practical joke of which I was the victim.

“Come on, Lytton, you will have to hurry,” a group of men said to me. “They are all ready to wheel you in. Come on, jump into the pie.”

I was squeezed into the pie, and had to sit there with my legs crossed and with a huge lid



MY MAKI-UP IN "IHL PIRATTS OI PLNZANCE"



on top of me for over half an hour. I discovered afterwards that they were not ready for me, but everybody thought it was a hugely funny joke that I should have been shut up for such a long time that when I did emerge, instead of looking the personification of happiness, I was flustered and red, could hardly breathe, and felt ready to burst. But it gave everybody a good laugh, in which I joined as soon as I could fill my lungs with air, and we had a very jolly time.

In the evening the Gilbert and Sullivan Company gave a very fine concert. With sixty members of the company on board it was not difficult to draw up a very good programme, which delighted everybody and resulted in quite a nice sum being collected for charity.

The following days were just as happy, although the voyage was not entirely uneventful. On several occasions we were within sight of huge towering icebergs which, while looking very beautiful as the sunlight caught and reflected upon them, seemed to me to be very dangerous. Anything might happen, I thought, if we were to strike one of those fellows. But, of course, the good skipper knew his job and nothing untoward did happen.

One morning, as I stood leaning over the rail watching the seemingly endless Atlantic flow by, I saw a huge whale throwing water. It was a very impressive sight. More amusing and less impressive were the schools of porpoises which constantly appeared and seemed to be dancing round us.



Then, at last, came Newfoundland.

My first impression of this new country was, I am sorry to say, very disappointing, a disappointment which I quickly overcame once I had landed and had really entered Canada. But the coastline seems endless and dreary. Everywhere there was ice and snow, and the coast itself is rocky and bare, giving one no sense of welcome and no thrill. In fact, the coastline of Newfoundland seems to me to be desolation itself. Of course it was winter-time, which made it necessary for us to land at St. John's and to travel to our first real stopping-place by train.

Not only was there ice and snow everywhere but it was intensely cold, although the natives did not seem to think much of it, remarking that it was only twenty-five degrees below zero!

I was glad that my first impression of Canada did not last. The country really is very beautiful once you have passed the coastline. Not only is there the great grandeur of the scenery, but the people are very friendly, and the hotels—a very important point with a visitor, I should like to mention, particularly with a theatrical visitor, who is constantly moving from town to town—are extremely well furnished and very comfortable. The atmosphere inside them during the winter is kept at a nice even warmth and every one of the hotels seems to be a luxury building. Every building in Canada, of course, is centrally heated.

If the natives, the Canadians themselves, did not think twenty-five degrees below zero was anything to talk about, it was more than cold

enough for me. Just how cold twenty-five below is you will be able to gather, perhaps, from this little incident. In the hotel bedrooms the radiators are fixed under the windows, and in the frame of each window is a small slot made to open so as to let in a little cold air. One day I left a bottle of soda water and a bottle of Canada Dry—which is a type of ginger-ale—standing on the window-sill over the radiator in my bedroom. There must have been a slight draught of cold air driving on to the bottle, because when I came back to my room after a short absence the bottle had burst, and it, together with the Canada Dry, had become a frozen mass—a mixture of glass, soda and ginger-ale, which had taken on the most fantastic shapes. It looked rather beautiful, but it also emphasized to me how really cold the weather was, and I took it as a warning not to take any risks by going outside unsuitably clothed.

As a matter of fact, although it was so very cold there, after the sort of temperature one is used to in England, I found it extremely bracing and not difficult to bear, because it is a dry cold. But it is rather frightening if you have not had the experience before to go outside into the streets and find your breath freezing on your muffler and ice hanging from your moustache!

I was quite alarmed on one occasion. The end of my nose had become so cold that I took hold of it between my finger and thumb to rub a little warmth into it. As I did so I heard a curious crackling noise. I thought my nose had become brittle and was about to snap off. In fact, it was only a

thin sheet of ice which had formed inside the nostrils and which I was breaking up.

Incidentally, before I left Canada on this occasion the temperature fell to 40 degrees below zero. Then we too, like the Canadians, came to look upon 25 below almost as balmy spring!

Our first performance in Canada was at Montreal. It was the evergreen *Mikado*, and it was a strange and wonderfully comforting surprise to step on to the stage and to receive just the same reception as one gets at home. The applause was wonderful. Everybody in the company felt that their smallest effort was being appreciated. After the show hundreds of people came round to the stage door to shake hands with us and to tell us that they were so glad to see us because we provided a link with the past and with England.

English "as she is spoke" strikes these Canadians as very strange. They, of course, have an inclination towards the American nasal twang; a broader, harder, more brittle sort of speech. So interesting did they find our "dialect" that they used to follow us into shops just for the pleasure of hearing us talk.

On this point I might mention that on one occasion I was speaking at a Rotary gathering, and I thought I would conclude with a pleasant little apology for having occupied so much time—valuable time—of the business-men who were present.

"Well, gentlemen," I said, "I have been

talking rather a long time and, I fear, a lot of rot——”

At that moment a voice was heard :

“Sure you have, but don't stop. We like your lingo !”

I should like to mention that these Rotary meetings impressed me as much as any meeting I have attended during my life. The enthusiasm and patriotism can be described only as terrific. The patriotism of these Canadian business-men brings a lump to your throat. There you are—so I felt—thousands of miles from home, in a strange new land, among new people with new customs, and yet it is all still dear old England. That is a wonderful feeling which is emphasized at the end of these gatherings, when the whole assembly swings round to face an enormous Union Jack—which is always hung across the width of the hall—and sings lustily and with great fervour, “God Save the King”, following the National Anthem by their own patriotic “Oh, Canada”.

This Empire feeling in Canada is very comforting to an Englishman who is visiting the country for the first time, and it is by no means confined to the men. The women, too, hold meetings to promote Empire feeling, and right royally do they carry on their great work—for, to me, it is a great work.

While I am giving you my impressions of Canada, I should like to pause here to say something which I think, in these days of unemployment and trade depression, is rather

important. It is this: Canada is a great and glorious country, and it is still a land of great opportunities for young men who are healthy and willing to work. Naturally enough the Canadians do not want people who are not prepared to work, but they are prepared to welcome with open arms and in the spirit of fraternal brotherhood any young man who goes to them as a friend, ready to accept them as such and ready to do what he can to be useful.

I should like also to hesitate here, to give an impression of that most wonderful city, **Montreal**.

Montreal, as you know, is built round the foot of a mountain. But it is not that fact which makes it impressive to me. It is this: Away up on the peak of the mountain the people of **Montreal** have erected a huge Cross. At night-time this Cross is illuminated electrically and it shines down under the great canopy of stars in the heavens as a symbol to all who pass along the streets below. There is something wonderful and awe-inspiring about it, and it is a beautiful sight to watch the impression it makes on people who do pass along the streets at night. Frequently you see a roughly clad, hard-working, almost "husky"-looking fellow passing along in the shadow of some great building perhaps. He will look up, catch sight of the great Cross towering above him, and make the Sign of the Cross reverently, as if giving the outward sign unashamedly that, for a moment at least, a greater outer influence than ours has been brought to bear upon him. I have noticed that this wonderful Cross,

shining like a beacon of faith, has the same effect on all whose glance falls on it, on rich and lowly alike. I am not, I think, an over-imaginative, nor an over-religious man, but that Cross is an emblem which it does well for all of us to remember.

Another great wonder of Canada, of course, is Niagara Falls. If you do not know, you may be interested to learn that at Niagara there is a gentleman who has constituted himself a sort of unofficial entertainer of all who make a visit to the world-famous place. He is a rich man who uses his large and lovely house nearby to entertain you. In a large hall there is a table set round with chairs in which various celebrities have sat. In one of them the Prince of Wales once seated himself and his name is now on the chair. Of course, everybody wants to sit in it, and I think nearly everybody does so.

On the day I paid my visit to Niagara I remember I had a cocktail before my lunch and various drinks with the meal. It was, I should tell you by way of excuse, an exceptionally cold day. My reason for mentioning the drinks and the coldness of the weather is that I had three falls before I reached the Falls!

You must not draw any conclusions from that, please; but I will tell you they were beautiful purlers. Once my feet went from under me and shot up into the air while I landed on my head. Fortunately, however, I have a thick skull, and, after rubbing the spot on which I had landed so unceremoniously, I was none the worse for the

adventure. Of course, two more falls did not improve matters, but when I got to *the* Falls I agreed with everybody else that the mishaps on the way were worth it.

I cannot describe the awe-inspiring spectacle nor the noise made by hundreds of thousands of tons of water crashing down over the precipice. Of course everybody who visits the famous place has to go down and walk under the Falls. You dress specially for the occasion in waterproofs and sou'-wester hats, and the experience is very thrilling. The sound of the water is like a thousand thunderstorms all rolled into one and continuous.

Another thrilling experience which I shall not soon forget was to ride round the Falls in a sleigh drawn by two fiery Arab horses. It requires great skill to drive a sleigh under any circumstances, but to drive one over frozen snow in mountainous country is tremendously difficult and, if you are not an expert, extremely dangerous, for on a sleigh there is very little braking power under the best of conditions. Under the conditions existing when I took my first drive we had no braking power at all. Once we got started we went, "and how!" as our American friends say.

At Fountenac there is the Church of Continual Prayer. Nuns are always praying there throughout the night and day, winter and summer. They pray in relays, continually offering up prayer for mankind. Before one relay leaves, another takes its place. Some of these holy women



*Back row* : ARTHUR HATHERTON, LAURENCE GROSSMITH, HENRY LYTTON, ROBERT NAINBY  
*Front row* : LIONEL MACKINDER, RUTLAND BARRINGTON, GEORGE GROSSMITH, M. R. MORAND





are thus always there. I think it must be the only church of its kind in the world.

It was in Montreal that I had my first ride behind huskies—those little dogs that are so hardy and so plucky. I rode behind six couples of them rushing over the dry, frozen snow.

It is a tremendously exciting experience, but even that thrill was capped for me when a friend sent a sleigh round to the hotel door one morning. It was a sight I shall never forget. Imagine two coal-black horses with silver and white harness and bells and the coachman and footman almost hidden in furs. When I got into it and was wrapped up in rugs I felt tremendously important, for the police, knowing to whom the sleigh belonged, stepped smartly to one side as we flashed by with a glorious jingle of bells and saluted us respectfully. But, truth to tell, I was not properly dressed for the occasion, although I was looking so ceremonious, and I had difficulty in not shivering in a most undignified way from the intense cold!

I count myself fortunate, indeed, to be able to number among my friends Mr. Robb, the Vice-President of the Canadian National Railway. When I met him during my tour we quickly found that both our tastes and our golf handicaps were almost identical. That our tastes were similar enabled us to have some very enjoyable times socially, and our golf handicap similarity meant that we had many a happy tussle on the links during my stay. And what golf links they are in Canada; and what wonderful club-houses! The

latter are more like palaces; and I should declare that their restaurants are among the finest to be found anywhere in the world.

But most interesting to an Englishman, however, are their changing rooms, which are a sheer delight. The shower-baths are more like miniature marble temples than baths. That is to look at them from the outside. But when you enter you find that laid out on the marble slabs are all sorts of wonderful hair lotions, put there by enterprising firms—for advertisement! These enterprising business men go in for this advertising so far as to supply free slippers to cover your feet from the short distance to the shower itself. As soon as you have finished making use of them these slippers are thrown away. No pair is used more than once. The cost must be considerable, but the Canadian firms who adopt this sort of advertising must have been convinced that they get a profitable return for their outlay in this direction.

Among the most luxurious of these clubs are the Dixey and Bruno. Golfers, they say, are the same the world over, but at these particular luxury clubs everyone to whom you speak, and everyone whom you see, seems to be a millionaire. Many of the clubs are, of course, very exclusive, but not quite in the same way as we understand the word in England. I heard of one club, for instance, which would not elect a certain man who desired admission. The man did not, however, go off in high dudgeon. He merely suggested to the Committee that he should build a branch

railway line and a station for the use of the club members. He followed up his suggestion by building the line and the station; and—he was elected a member!

One sees strange things—besides the golfers—on these courses. One day I was playing to a hole when I was suddenly put off my stroke by the most weird noise I had ever heard. It came from the woods surrounding the green, and the nearer we got the louder grew the noise. Puzzled, I asked my opponent what the commotion was, and he told me it was the croaking of thousands of frogs. Those who use this particular course constantly are accustomed to the weird effect, but my personal opinion about it is that it constitutes an unfair hazard. However, that's as it may be.

Another novelty which you find on these Canadian courses is the method of supplying thirsty players with a drink whilst they are having a round. Under the trees here and there round the course are little white-enamelled drinking fountains. In order to get a drink—of water!—you press a button and a jet of spring water shoots up. Curiously enough, you are left to drink it in any way you can. If you are really thirsty—and it is surprising how thirsty you can get playing golf!—you soon find a way of overcoming this difficulty.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

AFTER our stay in Montreal we moved on to Toronto, and when we arrived there we were delighted to find all the friends we had made in Montreal had written ahead to their own acquaintances in the city to advise them that we were coming and asking them to make plans for our entertainment. That was a typically delightful Canadian gesture which helped considerably to make our trip highly enjoyable.

One result of this advising ahead was that life became rather hectic for us, and so many invitations were showered upon us that it was impossible for us to accept all of them. The hospitality of Canadians when they like you—and if they do not like you there is usually a very good reason—is almost beyond belief. Nothing is too much trouble for them if it will add to your comfort or your entertainment.

While in Toronto I stayed at the Royal York Hotel, which is the largest hotel in Canada. The size of it is so great that it makes a stranger feel like a native of Lilliput. The *foyer*, for instance, is like a stock exchange. There are hundreds of people standing about, all doing business; in fact the business done there must be colossal. The floor of the *foyer* is vast. It is so big that it is frightening when you first enter the place. It is

a new world, and you do not know whom to ask for advice or where to go unless you know the ropes. When you know your way about, of course, this great *foyer*, which is used as a meeting-place by business acquaintances, is a delightful place, but I should advise no stranger to go there unless in the company of a friend. It is like entering a miniature desert.

The lifts in this hotel, by the way, are worth mentioning. Not only do they go at a tremendous speed, but they work like railway trains—to a time-table. This will probably seem surprising to anyone who has not seen or been in a skyscraper, but, believe me, when you enter a lift in one of these towering buildings you need to have an idea where you are going. You might be living on the twentieth floor and by a mistake find yourself almost in heaven! Surprises like that are apt to be a little disconcerting!

The next town on our tour was Winnipeg, one of the great grain centres of the world and again a truly remarkable place. There is Winnipeg, dumped right in the centre of the prairie, with nothing but prairie all round it. This, of course, is the case with many of the large Canadian cities.

It was in Winnipeg that I met a most remarkable woman who had a remarkable job, which was to forecast the extent of the crop, and by the weather conditions in winter to estimate the amount of the harvest. She is able to tell everyone concerned long before there is the slightest sign of corn or cereal crop poking through the earth

almost exactly what the extent of the harvest will be. It is upon her judgment that all the grain growers of the district base their calculations.

Everywhere we went the audiences were still of the same type—ready to welcome us and ready fully to appreciate all our efforts to give them the real Gilbert and Sullivan operas. It was rather moving at times to see an old lady or gentleman here and there among the audience, who must have come out from England many, many years before, surreptitiously wiping the tears from their eyes as the operas brought back to them memories of their old homes and the old country.

There are some people, of course, who, although they have spent the major part of their lives in Canada, never seem to lose the feeling that England is their real home, just as the people who spent their childhood in Scotland never seem to settle down in London and whenever they speak of home mean the northern country.

During our tour of Canada we came across many people of this type. They were almost invariably elderly, of course, and were English as distinct from Canadians born and bred.

From Winnipeg to Vancouver; a long train journey of several days and nights. I particularly remember the nights, for, although we were passing through the most glorious scenery which we could look out upon during the day, one has a very human habit of remembering the unpleasant things of life. I can think of nothing more startling than to be sleeping in a bunk in one of these huge

trans-Canadian trains when it restarts in the night after a stop. Anyone who has ever done this will appreciate what I mean when I say that the unfortunate person sleeping in a bunk is like a shuttlecock.

If you are fortunate, the train rattling over the metals had lulled you into sleep. Then the train stops with a great clatter and banging, and you, the unfortunate sleeper, are shot to the bottom of your bunk. Awakened rudely thus, you climb back into your proper position in the bed and try to doze off to sleep again. Then, suddenly, without warning, there is a great clanging of bells, a hoot as the steam is released, and the great train rattles and shoots forward and once again you are shot unceremoniously to the far end of your bunk. To ride on an English railway after experiencing a Canadian one is like gliding through the air.

At Calgary, which is 5,000 feet up, I had the curious experience of suffering from continual bleeding of the nose. It was caused, of course, by the change in the atmospherical pressure, and when I complained to a Canadian friend that ever since I had been in the town I had been suffering from nose-bleeding he replied, quite cheerfully :

“That’s all right. If your nose didn’t bleed, you’d throw a fit.”

So perhaps, after all, it was just as well that my nose did bleed.

At Regina, however, I had a really terrifying experience. I was caught in a blizzard. If you have never been in a Canadian blizzard, I am afraid



I cannot describe to you exactly what terrors it holds. It came on quite suddenly: a terrific snowstorm with a terrific wind. The first thing I did was to run into a doorway for shelter. I could see nothing. I could hear nothing. I just stood in the doorway helpless. Of course it was bitterly cold, and while I stood there I admit that I was terrified. Presently a shadow approached. It seemed to come out of the air. At the same time a ghostly and uncanny voice said :

“Are you all right?”

“No,” I said truthfully; “I feel very ill.”

The “shadow” turned out to be a policeman who was accustomed to blizzards and knew his way about in them almost with a sense of touch. Fortunately for me, he took my arm and helped me along to the theatre.

Had the policeman not come along at that moment I might not now have been writing this book of my reminiscences, for just before he appeared I felt a faintness coming on, and if I had fallen, there I should have remained, helpless, perhaps to have been frozen to death, since, in addition to the blizzard and the risk of the snow covering my body, the temperature was thirty-eight degrees below zero.

Fortunately for me, the policeman did come along and find me, and, equally fortunately for me, the next day there was a “shinuk”, which is a warm wind. That enabled me to breathe normally again and to regain my equilibrium after a very nasty experience which I did not forget for a long time.

It was while we were playing at Calgary that the Sarcee Indians were invited to come and see one of our performances. Eight or nine chiefs of the tribe accepted the invitation and were given a box. After their visit the box was *not* like a scent factory !

The Indian braves seemed thoroughly to enjoy the show, although they could not have understood one word of it, and they treated the occasion with ceremonial solemnity.

Most of them turned out in their tribal regalia, but one of them was wearing a European suit which someone had given him, so he was put in the front row to show that he knew how to dress and how to behave when he was among the big White Faces. But his dress was rather amusing. It was composed of a frock-coat, flannel trousers, patent-leather boots and a very bright, almost jazzy tie.

## CHAPTER SIX

IT is at this point in my chronicles, I think, that I should introduce myself as the Sarcee Indian chief Running Wolf. That was the name given to me when I had the honour of being made an Indian chieftain conferred upon me by the tribal chief Black Crow, who, I was informed, had chosen that name for me because, he said, I was fleet of foot as a young cub.

How the old gentleman happened to know this is a mystery which I cannot explain, but the fact remains that as a youngster at school and as a very young man I was very fleet of foot and could do a one hundred or two hundred yards sprint with anyone without getting left very far behind.

The ceremony at which I was made an Indian chieftain was very impressive. The message was sent to me that the honour was to be conferred upon me during the company's stay in Calgary. Surrounded by Canadian Mounted policemen—fine, strapping young fellows with their scarlet coats, blue knee-breeches and highly polished top-boots, riding prancing horses—I rode out of the town towards the Indian Reserve to meet the tribe. After a while the road became very bad and eventually disappeared altogether, lost in the prairie, and I had to leave the motor-car in which

I had been riding and try to do the remainder of the journey on foot.

It was our original intention to go the whole way to the Indian Reserve for the ceremony, but the travelling was so bad that we had to send a messenger ahead to explain to the Indian chief, Black Crow, that it was impossible for us to make the whole journey. Although a very old man, Black Crow set out at once with the whole of his tribe on his way to meet me.

Presently there came to our ears the mysterious sound of the beating of thousands of muffled drums—it was, in fact, the hoof-beats of the horses the Indians were riding. It gave me all the thrills which I used to experience as a boy when I read some of those wonderful stories of adventure on the great rolling Canadian prairies. Here was a story-book yarn coming true.

Soon after the great beating noise was heard there suddenly appeared on the crest of the hill in front of us what appeared to be thousands of wild horses, dashing towards us at a terrific pace and ridden by shouting and shrieking Indians who despised saddles and reins, riding superbly bareback.

Just before the cavalcade reached us, at a moment when I thought we should all be ridden down, the horses suddenly stopped as if by magic and the Indian riders alighted.

I was immediately introduced to the great Indian chieftain, Black Crow, by Starlight, who could speak English and was to act as interpreter throughout the ceremony. An Indian tent

was erected and Black Crow, who had entered this, came out and knelt on a piece of old carpet. Meanwhile the Indians had formed a hollow square outside which the scarlet-coated Canadian Mounted policemen reined up in magnificent line. It made a wonderful picture out in the middle of the prairie under a blazing sun shining from a clear blue sky. You can, perhaps, imagine the colourful scene for yourself.

Black Crow, who was kneeling on the carpet, said something which, of course, I could not understand, since it was uttered in the native dialect. I asked Starlight what it was, and he replied that Black Crow had been pleased to make me a chief of the tribe and had given me the name of Running Wolf. Black Crow, a very ancient and wrinkled old gentleman, whose appearance, nevertheless, was very impressive, then advanced towards me and, placing one hand on my shoulder, again uttered some words which I could not understand, but Starlight explained that what he said was :

“On you, my son, may the sun never set.”

That phrase, a rather nice Indian benediction, was afterwards written down for me on a piece of paper in the Indian language by my friend Starlight. I reproduce it here :

Ka-taw-na-ma-cou  
(May the sun shine on you).

Once again Black Crow began to speak, and Starlight interpreted for me as follows :

“He is asking you now to promise to guard

and preserve the tribe's womenkind on all occasions, to stand by in battle, and to go before your tribe in any trouble; to protect the aged men and women of your tribe."

I was then given a wonderful headdress made of eagle's feathers, together with a sacred belt and ornamental cuffs.

Incidentally, you see some of these wonderful headdresses in the pawnshops in the cities, the Indians having pawned them in order to get "fire-water".

At the conclusion of the ceremony I was offered a full Indian dress regalia outfit, but Starlight informed me that Black Crow required in exchange for it two hundred dollars, so I decided that, as the suit would be rather useless to me, I would not make the purchase.

Black Crow, who was then ninety-four years of age, is a very remarkable man who possesses strange powers. Speaking through Starlight the interpreter, he asked me to tell him all about the Great White Chief, meaning, of course, His Majesty the King. It so happened that at that time His Majesty was lying seriously ill in London and loyal citizens at home were gathering round Buckingham Palace praying for his recovery. I told Black Crow all about this. He thought awhile and then smiled.

"Great White Chief will recover," he said.

As we all know now, His Majesty did recover.

Black Crow, speaking on behalf of his tribe through Starlight, gave me a message of loyalty

to His Majesty the King, which I was very happy and honoured to forward through Mr. Stanley Baldwin, who was then the Prime Minister. Subsequently I received a letter from Number 10, Downing Street thanking me for the message and asking me to convey His Majesty's appreciation of the Indians' loyalty, should I ever fall in with the tribe again.

Before we left Black Crow remarked to me through Starlight :

"You will write to me, my son."

I promised the old gentleman that I would do so, but I am ashamed to recollect now that I have failed to keep my promise. I must rectify the omission at once.

There seemed to be only one word of English known to the whole of the tribe, with the exception of Starlight, who, of course, had a fair knowledge of the English language and worked as a sort of liaison officer between the tribe and the Canadian authorities. The one English word which seemed to be universally known to the whole of the tribe was the very democratic one, "Cigarette", which they pronounced "See-gar-ette". After the ceremony they crowded round crying, "See-gar-ette, see-gar-ette, see-gar-ette!" Of course I was only too anxious to oblige my tribe when they expressed such a simple wish, especially as it was the first one they had made to their new chief. I felt for my case and shared all the cigarettes I had among them, but imagine my surprise when, instead of lighting the cigarettes, they popped them into their mouths, paper and all, and commenced to

chew them! Apparently cigarettes are a great relish among my Indian tribe!

Finally, the ceremony over, the whole tribe, headed by the ancient Black Crow, jumped on their horses, whirled them round with wild, blood-curdling yells, and rode off in a thundering mass, back over the brow of the hill. These fellows, the old chief not least among them, are marvellous riders. They spurn stirrups and any other aid to riding which we know, but they can sit a horse, no matter how wild, as easily as a retired colonel can lounge in a club armchair. But, it should be mentioned, they do so far more gracefully.

I shall never forget the sight of that wonderful cavalcade riding back over the hilltops to their Reservation, waving their arms, brandishing tomahawks, shouting blood-curdling cries which I could not understand, but which, apparently, were shouts of joy primitively expressed.

So, as a newly appointed Indian chief, I rode back to Calgary with my splendid bodyguard of Canadian Mounted policemen, who saw me back to my hotel and saluted me as a celebrity before bidding me farewell.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

THE Canadian Mounted policeman is a romantic figure in actual life, as well as in the boys' adventure books. He is undoubtedly a strong, silent, handsome man, and many of them have wonderful stories to tell if only you could persuade them to relate them. I was fortunate. I heard a wonderful story from one of them, but only after the man's captain had persuaded him to talk to me.

It was on the occasion of my second visit to Canada, which was only four years ago. In order to comply with the laws of the country, the Gilbert and Sullivan Opera Company, like all other theatricals, had to cross from Vancouver to Victoria at intervals and back again. There is some law which prevents theatricals from staying in a town for more than a certain period. On the steamer on which I crossed on one occasion were a number of Mounties who were going to meet Lord Willingdon, the Governor-General of Canada, who was arriving at Victoria, and for whom they were to form a bodyguard.

Incidentally, I experienced a curious coincidence in connection with the strapping young fellow from whom I gathered the story which I am about to relate to you.

I had been talking to this tremendously



RUPERT D'OYLY CARTE



broad-shouldered six-footer, when eventually he looked at me almost shyly and said :

“We have met before, sir.”

I looked surprised.

“Have we ?” I said. “Where could we have met before ?”

“It was at Brighton, sir,” he said.

I still looked surprised, and he recalled to me a day when I went down to Brighton, in Sussex, to see my son, who was then at Brighton College.

“Do you remember,” the Mountie asked, “taking your son out to the Grand Hotel, and to tea ?”

I said that I did.

“And do you remember that he had a boyfriend with him ?” asked the Mountie.

“Yes,” I said, “now you mention it, there was a young whipper-snapper with him. A rather nice little chap.”

The Mountie blushed.

“I was the whipper-snapper, sir,” he said.

Just imagine going all those miles and meeting quite accidentally a little fellow you had taken out to tea years before and whom you had forgotten. The world, after all, is a very small place.

But that is not the story that I had started to tell you. It is truly a story of the great wide open spaces and came to me through him. I pass it on to you as it was given to me by the former school-chum of my son.

These Mounties, I should explain, never talk about themselves or their experiences, and I am certain that I should never have heard this story

had not the young man's officer persuaded him to tell it to me. It is a practice in the Canadian Mounted Police force, I should mention, to test the courage and initiative of a trooper as soon as he has finished his training. This particular youngster had only left the training station about a week when word came in that a skin-trapper, who was one hundred and thirty miles out in the prairie, had gone mad from sheer loneliness. He was in possession of a Winchester rifle and word had come to the station that he had already shot one man.

It was no wonder that this particular poor fellow had become mad, the officer explained to me, because, like many others who follow his trade, he had been alone for two years on end, with no other company than that of a dog. It needs little imagination, I think, to conjure the lonely life that these trappers live, with nothing round them but the tiring mountain scenery as the only relief to the prairie, which rolls on for mile after mile, seemingly to eternity. It is not unnatural, therefore, that a man, forced to live alone in these great wide-open lonely spaces, should be seized with what is called "snow madness".

The very severe test of skill and courage which this trooper friend of my son's boyhood days had to undergo was to ride out to find this madman and bring him in. Jack—for that was the Mountie's name, I discovered—was handed the longitude and latitude of the spot where the mad trapper was believed to be, and off he went with his packhorse.

Here, I think, Jack had better tell his own story, which his captain described as the "dog game".

The young fellow was clearly embarrassed at having to relate the story to me, but here it is :

"Well, sir," he said, "I had ridden out for six days, when I came to the neighbourhood of the hut. I camped some distance from it that night, and early the next morning I got up to the hut as closely as I dared in order to reconnoitre the position. I confess that I was severely scared by the first reception I received. As I crept near the hut, moving on my stomach with as little noise as possible, the most extraordinary howls and shrieks of laughter met my ears. They seemed to rend the silence. The crying and shrieking went on for about three-quarters of an hour while I remained there on my stomach wondering what was the cause of it and what I should do. Eventually I saw a man, obviously the trapper, a big, tough-looking fellow with a rough, shaggy beard, come out into the open and start rolling about on the ground.

"Taking my courage in both hands and hoping for the best, I stood up and began walking towards him, whereupon he immediately dashed back into the hut, came out again with a gun in his hands and took a pot-shot at me. Fortunately it missed. I sank on the ground and he lost interest in me. The poor fellow's clothes were in rags, and there was no doubt about the condition of his mind.

"I watched his every movement carefully,

meanwhile trying to think out a plan how I could approach him and bring him into the station without harm to him or to myself.

"While I watched I was amazed to see him start jumping up and down and begin barking while he careered round in circles. I crept a little nearer and discovered that he was going round and round what looked to be the body of a dog. It dawned upon me that the poor fellow was suffering from a delusion that he himself was a dog.

"That gave me an idea.

"Rather gingerly I raised myself on all fours and began to pop up and down a little. The trapper watched me, and to my satisfaction he did not pick up his gun but just remained on his hands and knees staring at me. Although I felt very uncomfortable and foolish, the fact that the fellow did not try to shoot at me again gave me a little more courage and confidence, and after a while I crawled forward a few yards. All the time I was jumping up and down trying to imitate a dog bounding about. At the same time I imitated the excited barking of a dog. Presently the mad trapper began to imitate my actions, and for what seemed to be hours we carried on this game of playing at being dogs.

"Every now and then the trapper would lose interest in me altogether and just sit down plaintively howling.

"By taking a hop towards him every now and then I at length got to within about ten yards of him. His gun, however, was still within his reach. How could I get him away from it, or it away from

him? All the time I was thinking out this problem I had to carry on the game of pretending to be a dog by bounding about and barking. I tried remaining still on all-fours and just barking at him; but this apparently did not meet with his approval, so I decided to wait patiently and quietly to see what he would do. But never for a moment did I take my eyes from him or his gun. At last he came to within a few yards of me, skipping just like an animal.

“Talking of the situation like this makes it sound rather ludicrous now, but at the time it was very serious and rather unnerving. The mad trapper’s terrible appearance made it worse than ever. His eyes were sunken and dreadfully bloodshot, and there seemed to be no skin on his cheekbones. He was so mad that he had bitten and torn himself on the arms during his fits, and, while some of the wounds were congealed, a gash near his shoulder was bleeding profusely.

“Gradually and very suspiciously he came a little nearer and nearer. At last, judging my time, I sprang at him and fell on him with all my weight. We fought a terrible battle. I had imagined that in his weak condition he would have collapsed quite suddenly, but his endurance was astonishing and alarming. I suppose everyone has heard of the uncanny strength of a madman. I can assure you that, judging from this experience, the stories are neither untrue nor exaggerated. The madman rolled over and over with me clinging to him. All the time he was kicking, scratching and biting and using terrific force, but fortunately I had



a fairly sound knowlege of ju-jitsu, and eventually I managed to get a hold on him. Even so, he struggled for a while to get free, and inflicted upon himself what must have been indescribable pain. All of a sudden, however, weak from the loss of blood, lack of food, and probably through pain as well, he fainted, and I was glad to see him drop back helpless. We had rolled over and over to within an arm's-length of the gun, and had the poor fellow's strength not given in at that moment I might not have been here to tell you this tale now.

"Happily I soon had him nicely tied up, and spent the rest of the day tending to him, bandaging his sores and trying to make him take a little food and drink. The poor chap was just like a little child. I fed him with a spoon and talked to him about his mammy, and gradually he became a little more normal and appeared to take a slight interest in what I was saying and doing.

"Even so, I was still faced with the problem of getting a lunatic back one hundred-and-thirty miles to the station. Of course I had the pack-horse, but the problem was far from one of transport only. Twice during the ride-in my lunatic-prisoner was seized with a fit, while some nights he howled repeatedly until his voice gave out.

"At night-time, for his own safety and for my own comfort, I used to tie him up to a tree. It was the only way I could devise to avoid trouble for both of us. During the day I sometimes let him run loose, but always took the precaution of seeing that his arms were tied. Eventually I

got the trapper to the station and civilization, where he was taken good care of and, I believe, eventually recovered.'"

"What do you think of that for heroism!" I exclaimed when Jack had finished his story.

"But, good heavens, sir," replied Jack, "it was my job!"

That is the way these splendid men take their work. No matter how difficult, if something has to be done it is done—efficiently and well, and there is no bragging or grumbling afterwards.

One of the saddest men I ever met in my life was one of these troopers. He had ridden with us in the cars to the Indian encampment when I was made a Sarcee chief. When we got out of the car in which we were riding I noticed that he walked with a very pronounced limp. I thought this was strange for a Mountie, so I questioned the man's officer when I got an opportunity of doing so.

"Two months ago," the officer explained, "that man was shot in the thigh. He was sent out to bring in a desperate prisoner and succeeded in getting him back to the station, even though he was so badly wounded by the man, who resisted arrest, that he had to be sent into hospital and came out only yesterday.

"Unfortunately," added the officer, "the chap will never be able to ride again, and this, as a matter of fact, is his last appearance in uniform. Owing to his injury he has had to be discharged."

Another Mountie whom I met questioned me very closely about the changes that had taken

place in London. He asked me all sorts of questions about all sorts of thoroughfares, and was so interested in the geography of London that I had to draw for him little maps of such places as the Strand and Piccadilly. In fact I drew so many little maps that he must have had a rough outline of most of the West End.

When I had finished all these little drawings he began to question me about which buildings had been taken down, which had been reconstructed and which had disappeared altogether. In fact he wanted a verbal picture of the whole face of London, it seemed.

Finally, he cross-examined me so much that I, too, became curious and asked him why he was questioning me in this way, and why he was so very particularly interested in London.

"Well, sir, it's this way," he explained, "I used to be a London bus-driver."

"Didn't you like the job?" I asked him.

"Oh, I liked it all right in a way, sir, but I had longings for the big, wide, open spaces I used to read about in magazines as a kid. And," he added with a laugh, "I've got 'em right enough."

He was very sentimental about London and all his old haunts, and the great tragedy for him was that I could not remember whether a certain flower-woman was still in possession of her stand at the corner facing Shaftesbury Avenue at the foot of Eros.

"I'm sorry you can't remember the old lady," he said, with genuine pathos in his voice. "She was a beautiful old gal. She used to give me a



THE LATE SIR WILLIAM GILBERT



buttonhole every morning on my first trip through Piccadilly. I should like to think that she is still there, because for me she is a real bit of old London, and you could find no one like her, no matter whether you travelled the whole world over. The Piccadilly flower-girls *are* London."

I learned a good deal about the Canadian trappers while I was in the company of the Mounties. Apparently it is the custom for trappers to go out into the prairie alone, despite the fact that they know that two years of their own company is likely to end in temporary insanity. Occasionally some of them who are married take their wives out with them on their trips, but it is seldom that a woman can stand the strain. Curiously enough, it is seldom also that two men can stand the strain, for it so happens that frequently the trappers are snowed up in a hut for weeks on end, and it can be imagined how easily friction could occur between two men marooned together under such difficult circumstances. Personally, I should have thought that it would have been easier for them to have gone out in pairs, but apparently this is not so. Moreover, I suppose each man wants to take all the profits for himself from the district over which he traps, and there is seldom enough work for two men to earn sufficient profit.

These trappers are an interesting and curious race of men. Although they risk madness, death, and all sorts of horrors going out into the wilderness in order to trap and earn their money, as soon as they get back to town they frequently spend

their accumulated spoils in one glorious burst of living. Many of them, of course, make very big money, but no matter how big the profits of a trip their money seldom lasts longer than a fortnight, and then back they go again to their lonely callings.

Incidentally, when they first come back to the towns they are fair game for all the sharpers of the district, and oftentimes they are deprived of the whole of their money within the first twenty-four hours. Although these fellows are tremendously strong and tremendously brave, they are, in a sense, very much like little children. What you read in books of big, strong, silent, handsome men being fair prey for all and sundry is very true of this type of man.

One of the happiest men I ever met I came across under rather strange circumstances.

One night as I was nearing my hotel—I think it was in Vancouver, if I remember rightly—a queer-looking man came up to me and inquired, “Lytton, isn’t it?”

As he asked the question, he touched me on the shoulder, and I looked round rather alarmed as I replied timidly, “Yes.” Wearing rough clothes and an unkempt beard, the stranger was not at all prepossessing. My feelings of apprehension were not allayed when the fellow suddenly grasped my hand.

Have you ever heard a man’s handshake described as a grip of iron? I had, but until that moment I never really believed it—in fact I had never really thought about it. But when he

squeezed my hand and shook it I thought he was endeavouring to turn my bones into pulp.

Before I could get over the surprise of his greeting he had explained, "We were boys together, Lytton."

I think I managed to exclaim, "Were we?"

"Yes," he said enthusiastically, "I taught you to catch trout at Ballasalla, Isle of Man."

Instantly my mind flashed back forty years or so, and I thought of the handsome youth who had initiated me into the art of trout-fishing. Hard work and a hard life had changed him beyond belief. Naturally, I was delighted to meet him when I knew who he was. We had a very pleasant chat, during which he told me that he lived out in the prairie sixty miles from the nearest town, and that he had spent most of his life since leaving England farming.

"But," he told me, with the light of happiness shining in his eyes, "I am going to sell up shortly, and then I shall go back to England with a nice little packet."

I expressed the hope that he had enough to live on comfortably, and he assured me that he had.

"And," he added, "I reckon both my wife and I deserve it."

His wife had joined him out in the Canadian prairie as a young girl, and during their first winter there they had been snowed up for no fewer than five months. Even when they were not snowed up, when weather conditions were more or less ideal, it was almost impossible to find anything to



do by way of amusement. So cut off were they from the outside world and any sort of social intercourse that they learnt off by heart the captions in the illustrated papers they had brought out with them and they used to recite them off to one another on being shown the photographs.

While in Vancouver I had a chance of going down to the Chinatown district. I had heard a great deal of the Chinese theatre, so of course I went off there, and sat through part of a very strange play. As an actor I have seen some strange productions in my time but never one so strange as this. There was no scenery, and the walls were absolutely bare, while the stage hands and actors seemed to me to be all mixed up. When a situation in the play demanded a seat or a table for the actor he simply stopped speaking his lines and asked for it, whereupon the property man came on without further ado and put it down wherever it happened to be required. Similarly, when whatever he had brought on was finished with he came running forward again and took it away.

I suppose it was ignorance of the Chinese customs on my part that made me fail to understand or appreciate the subtleties of the production. Every two minutes I seemed to be getting a fresh surprise which was in the nature of a complete enigma, but the biggest surprise of all came when I asked an attendant when the play would be over.

"In about three weeks," he replied laconically.

"Three weeks!" I exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, about three weeks," said the attendant.

I could not believe it, so I questioned him rather closely on the point, whereupon I discovered that the play had actually started about eight days before. I have heard a lot about old Spanish customs, but old Chinese customs are stranger still.

I began to wonder how the cast got on for their meals if they had to be playing for three weeks on end, and I soon discovered the answer to my mental query. When an actor had finished speaking all the lines he had to speak for the time being, he took his coat off a hook on the wall, put it on, put on his hat, and went off out of the theatre for food and drink. I saw several of them do this and some of them came back munching quite cheerfully, still holding a handful of food, and would think nothing of finishing his next piece of dialogue between bites.

I suppose it was very rude, but we Westerners who happened to be in the audience got a rather good laugh from the whole thing.

Perhaps the best laugh of all was when one of the characters had to stab a sleeping girl. In the middle of this high drama he stopped to call on the property man and ask him for a dagger. Unfortunately, the property man was caught unawares. He didn't happen to have a dagger with him, so he went off to look for one. Meanwhile the villain about to commit a stage murder stood over his victim waiting for the dagger to be brought on. In the middle of the wait he was seized with a fit of coughing. Nevertheless he stood over his victim all the time and

his victim very obligingly continued to sleep, unaware of the danger that she was in and failing entirely to take advantage of the opportunity given her to wake up and flee from the peril which was so close at hand.

It may have been a crumb from the meal which he had come in munching that had stuck in the villain's throat, or some other cause, but the villain continued to cough so long and so loudly that finally even the victim could stand it no longer. She looked up at him obviously rather annoyed, and then decided to go off to sleep again, and finally allowed herself to be stabbed without protest.

It was remarkably difficult to follow the play, even to the slightest degree, particularly as the murderer, having killed his victim, walked calmly to the end of the stage and sat down to carry on an apparently friendly conversation with the mother of the murdered girl. So far as I could tell where the stage began and finished, both the murderer and the mother were still on the set, and the mother suddenly broke off her friendly conversation to jump up and run about the stage calling down the vengeance of all her ancestors on the unknown murderer! Very puzzling, though, I must admit, extremely interesting.

Another interesting trip which I found time to undertake from Vancouver was a fishing expedition. Fishing is one of my keenest hobbies, and my friends were anxious to show me how they catch fish in the Pacific, so we went out into the Bay to catch salmon.

I soon discovered that it was vastly different from our own scientific fly fishing. Firstly, we set off in an electric launch, and when we were well out in the bay my friends let out from the back of the boat a long line with what appeared to be a silver spoon at the end of it.

"When you feel him bite, Lytton," my friends told me, "haul him in."

That sounded simplicity itself, but I wanted to know how I should tell when a fish was biting.

"You watch for that little rubber band to stretch," I was told. "That shows you you have something on the end of your line."

I confess I was thoroughly enjoying this new sport, although in half an hour we had not had a bite. But patience, of course, is more than half the joy of fishing.

Suddenly I nearly jumped out of the boat with fright. About fifty yards from us a large bewhiskered head had popped up out of the sea! Everybody laughed at my surprise. The old man of the sea was nothing more alarming than an old sea-lion.

But his presence was quite sufficient to scare the fish out of the bay, so we stopped attempting to catch fish that day.

Canada, as of course you know, and as I have indicated already, is not a country where everything is always fun. One hears of the hard lives lived by farmers, trappers, the mounted policemen, ranchers and the rest, but one seldom hears of, or reads about, doctors. The doctors in Canada are some of the people who have the very hardest

lives to live, especially in the wilder regions of that vast country. A summons for a doctor in the Middle and Western Provinces frequently means that the medical man has to make a journey of twelve or fourteen miles. Such a distance is not considered unusual in spite of the remarkable difficulties of travel. A doctor's car in winter is always loaded up with ropes, pickaxes and spade. Frequently the storms bring down a tree that falls across the roadway, which in some regions is little better than a dirt track, and travellers have to cut their way through before continuing their journey. Also, of course, heavy snow-drifts are sometimes met, and this frequently means two or three hours' hard work to cut a way through. Yet, as in England, a Canadian doctor in one of these wild regions never fails to answer a call.

The wife of one Canadian doctor friend of mine does not like to be left alone in the house when he goes on his rounds, which, of course, sometimes take him one or two days to complete. She always goes with him in the car as far as possible, walking or riding on horseback for the remainder of the journey with him to those parts where it is impossible to take a motor-car.

One day this doctor took his wife to a really lonely outpost, and for his wife's comfort he asked the patient, a woman who was ill in bed, if he might bring his wife to the hut to rest for a while he was there. To his surprise the poor woman burst into tears. She had not seen a white woman for several months, she said, and the unexpected delight overcame her so that she cried



THE LATE SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN



copiously. But the joy which the visit of the doctor's wife gave her did much to aid her speedy recovery.

Just how terrible conditions can become sometimes may be imagined when it is remembered that ropes are fixed to all the outlying houses, so that in the event of a blizzard anyone leaving the house may hold on to the rope and thus be guided back again. If this precaution were not taken it would be quite possible to go out and lose yourself completely although only a few hundred yards from your house. We in England do not know what a real snowfall or a snowdrift is.

A type of man of whom you read a good deal in works of fiction is the "remittance man", but, believe me, he is not merely a character of fiction. He is, I discovered, a feature of Canadian life. These "remittance men" are usually the younger sons of well-to-do parents in England who have disgraced their families and have been sent abroad out of the way to live on a remittance from their parents. So far as I could see—and I met a good many of these men during my stay in Canada—they spend a small part of their lives doing any odd jobs which turn up, and a very large part waiting around post-offices for money-telegrams to come out to them from home. A large number of them are well-connected fellows, and one might expect that they would fight their way back into society once again, but a "remittance man", once down, never seems to get up in the world again.

They are not usually very popular with the



townspeople, chiefly because they do not like work, but when they are near racecourses or fairs odd jobs which are easily carried out can be picked up without difficulty and many useful odd dollars result. The "remittance man", however, is a rather tragic side of Canadian life.

Not unexpectedly, I found some of them very charming fellows. I went with one of them, more as an experience than anything else, to what in England would be regarded as a very low dance-hall. Almost immediately I entered I became aware of a curious feeling that the pianist seemed familiar to me, and during an interval in his playing he came up to speak to me.

At first I could not place him, but with his help my memory returned. This young man, a good-looking, well-set-up fellow, was the son of an English Colonel, and had fallen in love with a sergeant's daughter. In these days of modern thought that would not be considered, I should have imagined, a very serious crime, but the Colonel had forbidden the marriage. Nothing daunted, the young man married the ranker's daughter and left immediately for Canada. In the summer-time, he told me, he spent his time and earned his living farming, but when the winter came and there was little work to do on the farm he made use of the fact that he was a fairly good pianist by getting a job in this dance-hall. Later that evening he took me home and introduced me to his wife and showed me their child, a beautiful little girl of two.

It so happened that I knew this young man's

father, and I also knew that the Colonel had been trying to trace his runaway son for many months. I told the boy so and begged him to communicate with his father as soon as possible. He promised me that he would do so, and when I returned to England I made a point of calling upon the Colonel at the first opportunity. I was delighted to hear that the boy had carried out his promise, and had not only written to his father, but was returning home within a month. The Colonel, who had recently retired from the Army, was full of praise for his son's grit. Had the boy disobeyed his instructions by marrying the sergeant's daughter and remained in England, he told me, he would never have forgiven him, but he admired the way that he had risked being cut off by his family and had taken his wife abroad to earn an honest living and support her and himself.

Before leaving the subject of Canada I must not forget to mention my dear old settler friend. I do not know his name, but I shall always remember him for two reasons. He was nearly eighty and as hale and hearty as could be, carrying on an active life in a very wild part of the country. But, despite his years, he would not leave the intense cold, which he loved.

He lived a good day's journey from the nearest city, and I was taken out specially to see him, since he was a fine specimen of an old type of Canadian settler that is fast disappearing. The old gentleman was an entirely self-contained unit. He was very glad to see us and welcomed us hospitably,

servicing with his own hands an excellent meal and going to no end of trouble to show us that he was pleased to meet us all.

During the general conversation I happened to say that I was going to California shortly, and I was so taken with the old man and the lonely life he was leading that I invited him to come with me for a short holiday. Imagine my surprise when he refused without hesitation.

"California is all right," he told me, by way of explanation of his refusal, "but you won't like it very much."

I asked him why he was so certain.

"Oh, well, I know you won't," he said. "I didn't mind it for a while, but the weather was too hot for me, and I had to get back to a little ice and snow. You'll not like the heat any more than I did."

"But wouldn't you like even a short holiday in wonderful California?" I asked him.

"Not on your life," was his reply.

Imagine it! There was a man who, by our standards, would be judged to be very old indeed, leading an active life and a sporting one, yet loving every minute of it, even the intense cold. It was thirty degrees below zero, and there was no doubt about it that he considered it "just fine".

## CHAPTER EIGHT

AMERICA is a very interesting country, but is not so "satisfying" as Canada, which for an Englishman has so many more historical associations. My second visit to the United States of America, however, was a very pleasant one, but I must confess that, although I found the American cities—and customs!—very impressive, I did not find them very awe-inspiring.

You read so much about America and American happenings in the English newspapers nowadays that the country is not a difficult one for a person who has not actually paid a visit to visualize.

One of the most extraordinary things that impressed itself upon me was that although America's oldest tradition is, one might say, the very newness of the country, I have never seen an American city that did not seem to be in a state of reconstruction. They are always pulling down gigantic skyscrapers which look perfectly good and modern to build new ones that are mightier and more impressive. The terrible thing for me, however, is that, night or day, they never seem to cease work in their building operations, and the noise of their huge electric drills pounding away on huge steel framework makes it almost impossible for a visitor to sleep if anywhere in the neighbourhood in which builders are operating.

So much was I disturbed by the noise of building near an hotel where I was staying on one occasion that I asked the manager how long he thought they had been building. With a twinkle in his eye he replied, "About fifty years."

"And when," I asked him, "do you think they will finish?"

"Maybe in another fifty years, or when the company goes bankrupt," he replied.

On your first trip to America you soon discover also that there are many strange things which you have to learn quickly unless you desire to make a fool of yourself. One of the first things I learned was that it is not a custom in that land to say "Please" or "Thank you." The first day in my hotel I said to one of the express liftmen, "Thirty-second floor, please."

All the people in the lift smiled. When I got out and said, "Thank you," they all burst out laughing.

I flatter myself that I am a man with a sense of humour, but I was so perplexed by this outburst that the next time I saw the liftman I asked him the cause of the laughter.

"Well, you see," he explained, "it was funny. You ain't got nothing to thank me for. It's my job. I gets paid for it, and I shouldn't be doing it unless I did. But there," he added, "you are not an American, so you don't understand."

After seeing the lighthearted way in which gold is delivered to the London banks, it struck me as rather remarkable that so much care should be exercised over the moving of bullion in American cities. A small army goes about with every car

that delivers gold, and the car itself is heavily armour-plated.

I was walking along a street in Chicago one day when I came to a thoroughfare both ends of which were blocked with police who displayed their guns very ostentatiously. For a moment I thought I had suddenly come along in time to witness a sort of Sydney Street drama, but as I watched I saw an armoured car stop outside a bank. Hardly had it come to a standstill before police officers jumped out of the car, each of them carrying at least one revolver. More armed men marched from the bank, and one or two sacks were carried in. In London a million pounds' worth of gold would be taken into or removed from the Bank of England without anybody in the street being any the wiser for it; but in America they have a happy, or unhappy, knack of advertising everything they do.

I suppose no reference to America would be complete without an authentic story of the gangsters. I came as near to having a personal experience of them as I wish to have. It happened in San Francisco. As I walked into my bank I noticed that one of the windows was broken and inquired what was the matter.

"There has just been a hold-up," I was told.

Gradually I gathered the whole story. The hold-up had been carried out by a man working on his own, and from the details of the story I could not fail to admire the fellow's amazing coolness and courage. He had walked into the bank at the busiest time of the day and had

pushed a paper under the wire cage demanding a large sum of money from the cashier, stating in which currency it was to be handed over. At the same time he coolly pointed the muzzle of a revolver at the cashier, levelling it at him from underneath his coat, which was folded over his arm. The cashier handed over the money, but at the same time pressed with his foot a button under the counter which sounded a warning bell to tell an armed guard in the roof that the bank was being robbed.

The bandit, however, knew all about the alarms and had prepared for them. Whilst he was actually in the bank he mingled with the other customers, keeping so close to them that even if the armed guard had been able to tell which among the crowd was the thief they could not have fired at him without risking hitting or killing one of their innocent customers. Having gathered up his money, the bandit suddenly dashed from the crowd into the street, and, as he singled himself out, the guard took a pot-shot at him. A perfect volley greeted him immediately he left the bank and ran up a side street. It was then that the window had been broken by the guard firing through it.

Actually the man got away, but the police were not worried over this fact. They expressed the opinion that, since the bandit had been working for himself, he would probably be dealt with by the gang which ordinarily had the monopoly of terrorism in that district.

Incidentally I learnt a good tip which you



J W. WELLS  
IN "THE SORCERER" I DO SOME SORCERISING





might do well to remember if you are contemplating a visit to America and ever get mixed up in a hold-up or any banditry. I was told that if ever I heard shooting I should at once take cover and hide my face, the reason being that if the bandits were of opinion that you had seen them, and could possibly identify them, they would undoubtedly try to shoot you down and thus destroy any possible evidence of identification.

Although I had been given this very valuable advice, I completely forgot it when in Denver one day I heard some shooting. I suppose I was so startled by the unaccustomed experience that my first instinct was to look round to see the cause of it; but I was soon reminded of my folly, for no sooner had the shots been fired than a lot of people began rushing past me, and one man in particular shouted, "Get into that store, you sap!"

It was then that I remembered the tip I had been given, and I was not slow to follow up the man's advice. I dashed into the store, and what went on outside I did not stay to think.

All this, I suppose, sounds as though hold-ups are everyday affairs in American cities. Actually, however, they are fairly infrequent, and I was lucky in seeing so many during my two months' visit; yet, after the crowds of an English town, it seemed to me as though every man was a gangster!

America is a land of surprises. I had many whilst I was there. For instance, one night it was raining very hard and I asked my dresser to get me a taxi. He failed to do so; all of them

usually on the rank near the theatre were engaged.

"Never mind, sir," exclaimed my dresser "if you like I will run you home in my car."

He did so, and I should like to record that it was a very nice little car. Everybody in America, of course, owns one.

In one town I was particularly struck by my dresser. His appearance and his speech were both cultured—so much so that I could not help being curious. In order to allay my curiosity I asked him what he did in the daytime.

"School," he replied ; "or I suppose you would call it University."

His only reason for working as a dresser in the evening, he explained, was to earn fees to pay his way through college. Like many other American youngsters, this one considered it unfair to ask his parents to pay for his education, particularly for the latter part of it, during which he was passing through college. Another dresser, I discovered, spent his daytime tutoring and was working for the extra fees to take a higher degree.

It is not only the children of working-class parents who do this sort of thing. It appears to be born in them that one of the most important things in life is success, and that if they are going to succeed they must learn to pay their own way as soon as ever it is possible for them to do so.

I had a remarkable illustration of this fact when an old American friend of mine brought his two boys to see me at the theatre. Father and sons were both well dressed, and the family looked,

as indeed they were, extremely prosperous. As the result of this visit my friend asked me for the week-end to his country house. I went and enjoyed my stay very much in spite of a slight shock I had during dinner on the first evening. The eldest boy came down, shook me warmly by the hand, and remarked brightly :

“This is the second time we have met to-day, Mr. Lytton.”

I looked surprised, and remarked, “Indeed, where have we met before ?”

“Oh,” he said cheerily, “at the corner of Main Street. I sold you a paper.”

I was very interested and questioned the boy, who explained to me that he was on vacation from college, so was filling in his time, which to an English schoolboy would have been leisure hours, by doing some useful work. The job he found easiest to acquire was that of selling newspapers at a street corner. So he took it, without any feeling that in doing so he might be lowering his own prestige or that of his family. Unlike most English schoolboys, he had no fear that his chums or friends of his father might see him selling papers at a street corner ; if they did see him he would probably have felt very proud of it.

I have a great respect for American youths who adopt such a businesslike attitude towards life, and there is no doubt that the experience they gain in these odd-time jobs is of immeasurable value when they set about making a career for themselves. It teaches boys, I think, not only

the necessary ways of the business world, but how to take a knock here and there; certainly it teaches them the value of money and the fact that this essential in life is not too easily come by: that if you want money, unless you are extremely fortunate, you have to work very hard to get it.

But I know I must have looked a little shocked when the boy told me about his newspaper-selling job, for his father was quite worried about it.

"You don't mean to say, Lytton," he said, "that, really and truly, they're still as narrow-minded as all that in England, and that they would not tolerate their boys doing a little honest work?"

Although I confess I was not in real sympathy with the truly British attitude towards this question, I tried to be patriotic by making what I fear were rather weak excuses, and the whole incident left me thinking. I thought even more about the subject when, at a shoe-shine stand, the man who cleaned my boots rather took the wind out of my sails by inquiring brightly:

"How did you enjoy the dance last night?"

It so happened that on the previous evening I had been to a rather big affair in the nature of a ball, and naturally enough I wondered how the shoe-cleaner could have known that I was present, but I replied, "Very much."

Then curiosity got the upper hand of me and I asked, "Were you there?"

"Sure," he replied. "My sister and I never miss a really good show."

You soon learn that nearly everybody in

America has an interesting story to tell if you are willing to listen, and I was not only willing to listen to his story, but exceedingly curious about it. He told me that he and his sister ran a fried peanut store during the daytime, and from the profits from this business they had saved up quite a considerable amount of money; so much that within the next six months or so, he told me, they hoped to be able to open a dance-hall and café of their own. Really, you cannot but admire this sort of thing.

Owing to the fact that America was supposed to be "dry", getting a drink in the United States was always an amusing business. If you found intoxicating liquor at a rich man's table, you were, on your first visit, apt to be a little surprised at the coolness with which the law was broken, and at the very unscrupulousness of even judges, who would provide really excellent wines for you and the next day go to the court and sentence a bootlegger!

And there was the other side of the picture. Once I was driven to a most mysterious-looking house—which had no lights—and was marched down several steps by a friend who had told me, in a knowing whisper, that he "knew where to get a drink". My friend knocked mysteriously on several doors, and at each one a grating was opened in reply to his rapping, and we were peered at carefully before the bolts were slid back and we were allowed to pass to the other side of the door. Finally we came to a sort of underground bar, and our reward was a glass of

perfectly terrible liqueur brandy which was so bad, that, had not politeness forced me to do so, I do not think I could have managed to drink it.

Another amusing experience which I had befell me in San Francisco. It had nothing to do with the Volstead Act.

I was coming out of the theatre after an evening show—feeling rather pleased with myself because I felt the particular opera we happened to be playing had gone over exceedingly well—when a man sidled up to me and whispered confidentially :

“Say, guv’nor, I’ve found out what’s wrong with your voice.”

I am well aware that my voice is not my strongest point when I am on the stage, and I thought that he might perhaps have something useful to tell me, so I replied cheerfully :

“Really? What is it? What is wrong with my voice?”

His reply was curt and to the point.

“You ought to cut your throat and let it out !” he said.

It was the same man, as a matter of fact, who had inquired of a well-known star who had annoyed the rest of the company by singing in his dressing-room :

“What are you trying your voice for—murder?”

Like the whole of the Gilbert and Sullivan Company, I was very excited when we arrived in California. Your first impression is one of intoxication, caused not by liquor, but by the

wonderful scent of the lemons and oranges growing in beautiful groves. There are no hedges or fences on the sides of the roads in California, so that there is nothing to stop you from halting at the wayside and picking a luscious orange from a tree as it grows.

The fruit looked so tempting to me as I drove through on the first day of my arrival there that I did stop the car and get out with the intention of plucking some of the fruit, but before I had been able to touch a bough a shout of alarm came from my friends who were following in a car behind.

There is, I discovered, a fine of one hundred dollars for plucking fruit in these parts without permission. I assure you it is a great temptation not to risk incurring that fine, for, in addition to the hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of wonderful orange trees planted in rows and bowed down with heavy fruit, you have to pass pile upon pile of oranges stacked up by the roadside waiting to be collected by the carts and taken to market.

I do not think that I shall ever forget the wondrous beauty of California, chiefly because of all the picturesque orange groves and acre upon acre of orchards. Intoxicating scents seem to hang heavily on the air wherever you are, and this more than makes up for the fact that in some places the roads are not too good. Long, unwinding stretches, covered with white dust that rushes up at you in clouds, choking your eyes and nostrils.



Incidentally, I discovered that my old friend of the Canadian backwoods, who, despite his eighty years, loved the extreme cold, was exactly right when he told me about the heat. The sun, while I was there, seemed to be a ball of fire in a cloudless heaven; a fire that beat down mercilessly the whole day through, with hardly ever a breath of wind to cool one's aching brows.

## CHAPTER NINE

No reference to California, I suppose, would be complete without mention of Los Angeles generally, and the famous film city of Hollywood in particular. During my tour of America I stayed in Los Angeles for three weeks, playing the good old Gilbert and Sullivan operas the whole time, a different one nearly every night, and on several days when there were matinées as well.

There has been so much written about Hollywood that is true, and so much which is not true, that it is very difficult to record here anything but my own experiences.

When the company arrived at Hollywood, a very dear friend of mine, Mr. Ernest Torrence, was one of the first to meet us, and we were immediately marched off to "get acquainted" with four very famous people, all of whom happened to be Englishmen. They were Ronald Colman, Clive Brook, Reginald Denny and William Powell. I found them all very charming, very sincere, and very hard-working men, who, despite long hours of labour in the studio, were extraordinarily kind to us and really put themselves out to entertain us and make us feel happy and "at home".

Life in Hollywood is very exciting, I can assure you. There is a large English colony there,

one of its leading lights being Ruth Chatterton. I have always admired her work enormously, and was very excited on the day that I met her. I found her a very charming lady—as captivating off the screen as she is on it.

Each night that we played in Hollywood we had a very distinguished audience. Every evening when the curtain went up we were faced by row upon row of world-famous people. Boxes or stalls, whichever way we looked, seemed to be packed with the faces of the stars who are known all over the world. One never realized before how many of them there are.

Their homes, like themselves—speaking particularly of the women, of course—are extraordinarily beautiful and well designed. A number of them have swimming-pools in their gardens, and one famous gentleman has a golf course which a professional from England laid out for him.

Ronald Colman, who, as you know, is an Englishman and was born at Ealing, is, I am proud to say, a very close friend of mine, and while I was in the American film city I spent many happy hours at his beautiful house. It stands high up on Beverly Hills and has a wonderful garden laid out in a series of terraces.

The house itself seemed to me to be the last word in luxury and comfort, but every room in it has been designed for a particular use, nothing in it being merely for show. The general design is carried out in the Spanish style, and so are the interior decorations. All his servants are Chinese.

How they do their work is a mystery to me. But nobody seems to worry about that, least of all Mr. Colman, who is no taskmaster—indeed, he has no reason to be, for all his servants love him and do their very best to look after him.

Like other film actors, Ronald Colman frequently, of course, has to turn night into day and to take his exercise as best he can, and one evening, as we were sitting out on a terrace after dinner, with the lights of Los Angeles winking in the distance, he showed me how very effectively he can turn night into day. Going over to a switchboard he touched a button and immediately his tennis-court was floodlit. He has a wonderful bathing-pool, and when he touched another button on the switchboard this was converted into a fairyland by an ingenious system of concealed lights which made the water glisten like silver that danced like a gossamer sheen against the dark marble of the bath.

All these world-famous film stars simply love giving parties, but the happiest I ever attended anywhere in my life was one which my friend Ronald Colman gave. If his fans could have attended it and have seen Ronald entertaining his guests they would have worshipped him more than ever, particularly if they could have seen his anxiety to please us all.

I noticed his obvious concern that everyone whom he was entertaining should be happy, and I watched him rather closely. Several times I saw him steal up to William Powell, who was assisting him in entertaining, and heard him whisper

anxiously, "Is everything going all right? Do you think everyone is enjoying himself?" And then the two of them would think of something new to keep the party going. The pair of them did much more than could be demanded of any host; they made everyone so happy that I am sure that we all felt like children again. I know I did.

Once during the evening when, quite unjustifiably, Colman felt things were going a little slack, he and Powell indulged in a wrestling match on the floor, not because they felt boisterous, but merely because they wanted to please everybody. The pair of them got down on their haunches, each put a walking-stick under his knees, bent his arms round the ends of the stick, clasped his hands over his knees, and then tried to do a little cock-fighting together. The antics they went through were really quite amusing, and the incident certainly gave new life to the party, which went on until the early hours of the morning.

I am glad to say that Ronald Colman is not the sort of friend who is glad to know you only when he meets you. Despite the fact that he is always working very hard, he frequently spares time to send me a long letter telling me all about himself and my many other friends on the Pacific coast who are engaged in the film-making industry.

I cannot, of course, remember all the well-known people whom I met whilst I was there. Norma Shearer, I remember, I met first when she was walking across the lawn in a wonderful

evening-dress towards the studios. Incidentally, that happened to be in the middle of the morning when a beautiful sun was shining, and Miss Shearer was charming enough to spare a few minutes to be photographed with me on the lawn. I also met Cecil de Mille, the celebrated producer, Colleen Moore, and the great Charlie Chaplin.

I spent a most interesting afternoon with Charlie Chaplin, during which he told me of how he had achieved his worldwide success. Chaplin's life has been a hard one, and his climb to the top of the ladder has been slow, although sure. Nothing that he has achieved has been attained without extraordinarily hard work on his part, for he is a conscientious artist who is never satisfied with anything but the very best that he can produce.

Amongst other things we talked about was his famous picture "The Gold Rush". While we chatted about it we sat in the summer-house in which, he told me, most of the "business" of this film was conceived.

He has been an art collector for many years, and his home is a miniature museum. I believe that a beautiful lacquer cabinet which he has was a gift to him from the Mikado of Japan. It contains wax models of the Mikado and his court.

I suppose it is natural that everything connected with and surrounding these stars of the silver screen should appear to be gilded with stardust—that is how the film city struck me. Everything seems to be lavish and to have no

money spared upon it. One film star while I was there gave his wife a wonderful surprise. They had just been round the world for a pleasure trip, and during their travels his wife had admired an avenue of eucalyptus trees. When she arrived back home she found that her husband had had planted for her a long row of full-grown trees in her own garden. How much that must have cost him I can only imagine.

The lavishness of the richer of the film stars would be difficult for anyone to surpass ; in fact, in many cases it is difficult to believe. Here, for instance, is a typical story. The mother of one successful young man admired a new car which he had just bought for some seven thousand dollars, and he thought it would be rather nice to surprise her by giving her a duplicate of the machine. But when he went to the agents he discovered that, while they had the same make of car, the body of the one in stock was not exactly the same as his. Whereupon, with much largesse, he gave a rush order for the exact duplicate of his own car to be made, painted and delivered to his mother. The duplicate car was delivered within two days, and it cost him several hundred dollars more than he had paid for his own car although it was exactly the same as his.

Something that particularly impressed me while I was touring some of the studios was that the dressing-rooms seemed to be almost as elaborate as the film stars' homes. Some of the really famous women stars seem to have a room for their shoes alone. It is nothing, I discovered,

for one of these beautiful ladies whom you see on the screen to have hundreds and hundreds of pairs of shoes. They are all stacked in racks in glass cases. You would think you were in the showroom of a first-class West End shoemaker's store. It is the same with their wardrobes, except that they take up even more room. The most beautiful creations are set out on models, all being attended by maids, so that upon entering a wardrobe you get the impression that you are in a West End salon.

Douglas Fairbanks, by the way, seems to be as keen on physical fitness as the best-dressed film star is upon her pretty clothes. He has an army of gym men : keeping fit with him seems to be almost a religion, and his army of gymnasium experts are famous in the film city.

Of course, most of the luxury and wealth to be found "in Hollywood" is not actually in Hollywood at all, but in Beverly Hills, which is just outside, and where all the film stars make their homes. There are, on the other hand, a number of people not too certain of their engagements who find life fairly hazardous on a few thousand dollars a year. These have to live in unfashionable quarters of the district in quite small houses.

One man, incidentally, lives on the top of a mountain and only a narrow dirt-track leads to his home. His rent, needless to say, is not very much, and he has gained quite a reputation as a result of his rather sensible eccentricity.

Then, again, there is yet another side to this



story of filmland. There are some very real tragedies of the cinema industry to be found in every corner of Los Angeles. The fame and fortune to be gained by the favoured few on the celluloid strips that are made in Hollywood seem to have given the place a magnetic attraction for everyone who is beautiful, no matter in which corner of the world they live. In all the shops you will find really beautiful girls of all types who have come from all over the world, each one hoping, trusting, and believing that luck will come her way. They all wear clothes of good material and of excellent cut—just a little out of date.

I was lunching one day at a fashionable café where we were waited on by a particularly striking girl.

“There is a girl for your films,” I remarked to my companion, who happened to be a film magnate.

“My friend,” he said, “there are hundreds about here like that girl, doing any odd jobs they can get hold of; any job that will feed them. Talk to her,” he added; “no doubt she has a tale to tell.”

I spoke to her when I paid my bill and my film magnate friend was right. She had a story.

She told me that she had won a beauty competition in the North of England. Everyone had implored her not to waste her opportunities but to have a shot at making her fame and fortune in Hollywood. Spurred on by this advice, her father and mother had scraped up enough money to send her out, and there she was,



THE AUTHOR AS THE EARL OF ESSEX



absolutely stranded. For a few months she had struggled along, occasionally getting work—usually in the crowd, and very occasionally being lucky enough to get a very small part. Most of her time, she told me, had been spent waiting outside agents' offices in the vain hope that one day she would find an agent who would be able to give her a job that would mean her one opportunity on the films.

“At last,” she told me, “I realized that here in Hollywood I was only one pretty girl among thousands, and that I should have been more sensible had I stayed at home. But that realization did not put things right, although it helped a little. The uncertainty of when I should have work affected my nerves so badly that at last I became sensible and took a job as waitress. That,” she added, “might not be exactly fame and fortune, but at least it is permanent work, and when you have waited hours on end, days on end, weeks on end, even months on end, hoping against hope that you would get work, you cannot fully appreciate the meaning of that word ‘permanent’.”

She seemed quite cheerful and, she told me, got plenty of changes, since the restaurant never closed and the staff worked alternately one week by day and one week by night. The pay, of course, was infinitely more than she would have earned in a similar position in England. The tips too, she told me, were generous, and she was gradually saving up enough money to take her back to England again.

This particular girl struck me as being extremely sensible, but, unfortunately, there are many who are too proud to admit to their parents that they have met with failure, and while the lucky ones exist as manicurists and hairdressers and manage to keep up the illusion that they have attained success by constantly writing letters home to their parents telling them of the wonderful things they are doing, there are many more who lead the most miserable hand-to-mouth existence.

While it is pathetic to visit the cafés, frequented by out-of-work extras, the camaraderie between them is really wonderful. If one of these girls receives any money from her parents she will not have the slightest hesitation in sharing it out amongst all her friends. Their living, of course, is cheap, because three of these girls would share one room ; but it is a mystery to me how they get enough to eat, for every spare cent has to go on clothes. This is not merely vanity on their part. They know that they must appear well dressed, for if they did not it would be hopeless for them to apply for work on the films at all, and when they can manage to get film work they are very highly paid for it. The tragedy is that the work for the screen is so very uncertain and usually lasts for such a short time that one day's salary has to last for many weeks' expenses.

It is this necessity to be smart in appearance that is the reason why, when you see these girls walking up an agent's stairs, you would imagine they had as much money to spend as they could

possibly desire. They are really beautifully turned out, and for this reason it is all the more affecting to see the pathetic eagerness with which they will accept an arduous day's work for a few dollars.

Incidentally, all the rumours, or at least most of them, about film stars being temperamental are very much exaggerated. In many of the contracts which they have to sign it is stipulated that they shall stop work at five-thirty in the evening, making exceptions, of course, for night-scenes out of doors, when it may be necessary to work all night as well as all day. Never does an actor or actress refuse to work longer than the specified hours if it is necessary to do so. It would be more than their jobs were worth for them to object, and they know it.

It might appear to you that five-thirty in the evening is rather an early time to stop work, but it must be remembered that work is frequently begun as early as six o'clock in the morning. That is something that we do not do in England; at least, the average person does not have to start work at that time in the morning. In America particularly they never commit the folly of wasting time, and to start work at eight, nine, or ten o'clock in the day is certainly wasting time.

Personally, and speaking as an actor, I felt very sorry for some of these film stars, not because many of them had to start work as early as five-thirty in the morning, but can you imagine playing passionate love scenes at that time of the day? I can assure you that the lives of these people

are not nearly so easy as they are often made out to be or popularly believed to be.

In Hollywood, too, I discovered they have a very efficient way of dealing with "temperament". If a star becomes a little too big for his, or her, boots the managers have a very good system which soon brings them back to their senses. At stated intervals representatives of all the companies meet, and if it is found that any particular artist is giving trouble by turning up late, arguing, or being troublesome on the set, the companies resort to a system which is known as "Thumbs Down".

The result of this is that the moment the troublesome artist's contract expires the unfortunate culprit is unable to get employment from anyone. In a comparatively small community such as Hollywood everyone knows pretty well how much money everyone else is earning, and the managers know, to within a month or so, how long to keep the man out of a job. If the case is a bad one, he will probably be left until he is almost penniless and is literally sponging on his friends before he is offered a reasonable part again.

I know of one artist—an Englishman by the way—who was a victim of this "Thumbs Down" system. Although he had been a very big star earning a really high salary, he was kept out of a job until he had literally not more than four pounds in his pocket before he again secured employment.

When I arrived back in England everybody

was saying that they had not seen this young fellow in a film for a very long time, and they were wondering why. The films he had been making since his "exile" had not started to come through to England. If any of your favourites disappear for a short while, this is probably the reason.

Generally speaking, this discipline never has to be exercised in the case of anyone who is really well known, for a movie star who is at the top of his profession is never so foolish as to give trouble to his company. During his climb to the top of the ladder he or she has learnt that the film-acting business is a very hard school, where the easiest way to get on is to do what you are asked, as best you can, and with the least trouble. It is usually the younger people, who have sprung up quickly into some importance and earn fairly large salaries, who are apt to become swollen-headed in this manner. Incidentally, I do not think that the managerial lesson has ever had to be enforced twice on the same person.

It was while I was in Hollywood that I met a rather pompous official from India about whom I must tell this rather amusing story. In India his official position entitled him to a band. He was very pleased with this band, and paraded it on all occasions. Then came disaster. He heard that an official in a neighbouring state had thirty-five instruments in his band while he himself was only provided with thirty-four. He conducted an urgent correspondence with headquarters, pointing out that his prestige might be seriously injured



if this state of affairs continued. Headquarters eventually wrote back informing him that it had been decided that his band should number thirty-four.

*"It is considered,"* the official communication informed him, *"that there is no need for another instrument, as it is quite obvious that you are capable of blowing your own trumpet."*

## CHAPTER TEN

SOME of my most thrilling experiences I have gained in Ireland. I have visited that country on and off, both privately and as a member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, for the past half a century, and there has always been something going on there. The real trouble, of course, was in 1916. I happened to be there when it began on that famous and never-to-be-forgotten Easter Monday when part of Sackville Street was burned down, all the public buildings were taken over, and anyone in the street wearing uniform was shot on sight.

To the outsider the "trouble" was extremely well organized. On the day it began a brilliant sun was shining in the sky, and, it being a Bank Holiday, everyone went off in the early morning for a day in the country or somewhere to enjoy themselves. It seemed like a normal public holiday, and yet everything had been arranged. The Gilbert and Sullivan Company was opening at the Gaiety Theatre that evening, so that I could not go far from the town even if I had desired to do so.

In the morning, however, I left my hotel with the intention of going for a stroll, and the first intimation I had that there was anything just a little different from any ordinary day was

the ping of a rifle. Before I could begin to think what had caused the noise I saw a crowd suddenly rush towards me and gather round a soldier who had fallen at my feet. He had been shot by someone in ambush as he was walking along the street. That occurred opposite the Gresham, near the Post Office, and as I looked up I saw that they were knocking out the glass from the windows and piling up the spaces with books and anything that could be used as a barricade.

Naturally I was startled, and I said to an Englishman who happened to be there, "What is all this?"

"I don't know," he replied; "I think this is an Army review day."

By noon all the public buildings had been taken over, and shortly afterwards martial law had been declared. It was a rather dramatic change from the peaceful early morning, when all Ireland seemed to be setting out to enjoy itself.

The crowd which had gathered picked up the soldier who had fallen by my feet and took him into a nearby house while I crossed the street. Before I was half-way over, I heard a volley of rifle fire. I know the sound of a rifle, and I thought to myself, "This is real; this is not a review of the Army."

My fear was confirmed almost immediately by a crowd rushing past me, and a man who was running with them stopped and remarked to me, "You're a stranger here?"

"I am," I said.

"Well, for God's sake take cover," he



HENRY LYTTON AS THE DUKE OF PLAZA-TORO



exclaimed, "there'll be murder done here to-day!"

I made my way to the theatre by dodging from doorway to doorway, and as I passed the famous St. Stephen's Green I noticed that it was barricaded off and that I was dodging along opposite a row of gun-muzzles which poked out at me all the way. Down all the areas of the houses I could see the spiked helmets of policemen who were taking cover.

I managed to get to the theatre uninjured, but when I did arrive I received another shock. One of the girls who was playing in the company was there. She looked terrified, was as white as death, and covered with plaster and powder from head to foot.

"Whatever's the matter?" I asked.

I was told that she had approached a policeman at the street corner to ask her way to the theatre, and whilst she was talking to him he was shot down dead by her side.

A volley had been fired at him, and a number of the bullets had hit the wall just behind them, with the result that her hair and clothes were sprinkled with brick dust and white powder. Anyone wearing uniform, of course, was shot on sight in those days.

Soon after my arrival at the theatre I was informed that martial law had been proclaimed, so that there was no theatre that night, and I was advised to get back to my hotel as quickly as I could, making my way by all the side streets and taking as much cover as possible.

On my way back to the hotel I discovered that some of the buildings in Sackville Street were on fire. Flames were reddening the sky and the dense volumes of smoke hung like a pall over the buildings. To add to the drama there was a terrific din of constant firing of rifles and machine-guns. But, despite all the pandemonium, at least one Irishman whom I met kept his sense of humour.

“Ah,” he exclaimed, “Rome’s burning! Where’s the fiddler?”

Finally I got back to my hotel safely, and found it was crowded with guests who were forbidden to go out. The windows had been barricaded, and we were literally marooned for the time being.

I am not a Catholic, but I was much impressed by the priests who happened to be in the hotel. There were a number of them there, and they all went round comforting everyone they could; and it was rather fine the way they conducted impromptu little services, offering up prayers that the trouble might cease with as little damage to life and property as possible.

One night soon after the trouble started we all at my hotel received warning that we would have to leave the building because the one next door was on fire and threatened ours. We were told to collect up all our valuables and be prepared to go. Pieces of débris from the burning building next door were flying past our windows, the wind being in that direction.

Of course to go out of the hotel, either by the back or the front entrances, meant taking a very

serious risk of being shot by snipers, and the prospect of having to leave was none too cheerful. Nevertheless, we made arrangements, but in the middle of all the scurrying to and fro the wind, which was blowing the flames towards our hotel, suddenly changed and began to blow in the opposite direction, thus saving the block in which our hotel stood, and making it unnecessary for us to risk our lives by leaving. That change in the wind seemed a miracle to me. I wonder was it ?

Half Dublin seemed to be on fire now, and, of course, no firemen could turn out, because had they attempted to do so they would have been shot down by snipers.

All the windows of the hotel were barricaded with mattresses and furniture ; orders had been given that no lights were to be shown anywhere. Of course my room was barricaded like the rest and the blinds were down, but there must have been a chink of light showing somewhere, for each time I moved my lamp a shot was fired and I heard it ping against the glass of the window-pane or on the brickwork.

One shot which was fired hit the lace curtain but, curiously enough, did not go through it. I examined it afterwards, and came to the conclusion that as the bullet—a ricocheted one, apparently—hit the curtain the curtain swung out with it and thus deflected its course, for I found the piece of lead on the bedroom floor just under the window.

Had the curtain not stopped the bullet in



that miraculous way I might not have been writing my reminiscences now, for it came through the window at a point just about on a level with my head as I walked about the room.

Friends to whom I have mentioned my experiences in Ireland at this time have asked me whether I was not scared. I suppose I was, but I think everybody on occasions like this realizes that the position is a helpless one and it is no good worrying about anything. We all, I think, took what came and hoped for the best.

Soon after we had been barricaded in our hotel the military arrived and took charge. Some of them came and actually sniped from the window of my sitting-room.

Curiously enough, my chief desire was to get outside in the fresh air. I could not stand seeing the sunshine coming in through a crack in my window blind, and finally, after resisting the temptation for a long time, I opened the window just wide enough to get my head out sideways and peeped down the street. No sooner had I got my head on the other side of the window than a sniper spotted me and took a pot shot. My head came in quicker than it went out, receiving a nasty crack at the back from the bottom of the window-sash. But what I had seen had made me curious, and I was ingenious enough to rig up a sort of periscope. I opened the window a tiny piece and so arranged my looking-glass that I could sit opposite and watch all that was happening down the street.

It was a strange sight. The street was empty except for one man. He stood immediately opposite

my hotel, in the doorway of Gilbey's wine shop, and he particularly attracted my attention because he was wearing a top hat and frock coat. He was standing behind two pillars, trying to take cover, but suddenly, as I watched, there was a shot. The man in the frock coat sagged, stiffened and went down on his knees. There he remained in that curious attitude for two days. He had been shot dead, a bullet penetrating his heart.

I put my periscope up so that it would show me a view of the opposite end of the street. There I saw a row of military men lying on their stomachs firing down Sackville Street.

Rigging my amateur periscope so that I could get a still wider range of vision, I saw a wonderful sight. One of our own gun-boats was stationed in the Liffey firing away with deadly accuracy on the row of houses from which people were sniping. It was uncanny to watch the precision with which they fired. A shell would hit the centre of a house and burst, and the next one that came over would hit the same place next door, and so on, right the way down the street.

The result was extraordinary. First there was the boom of firing, then a huge hole would appear in the centre of the house, the house would appear to shiver, and then, slowly and silently, the walls would bulge outwards and the brickwork collapse with a clatter in a cloud of dust. Standing in this row of houses at which the gun-boat was firing one at a time was a building used as a Y.M.C.A. hostel.

As I watched, I saw a little bit removed from

the centre of the Y.M.C.A. sign, a rifle poked through and a shot was fired. Hardly had the sniper fired than a shell from the gunboat landed at the very spot, and I remember exclaiming to myself in an excited way, "Got him!" although I had no idea who the sniper was and had very little idea of the cause of the trouble. All I really knew was that I was in it and would be very glad to get out of it.

After the trouble I went over to the Irish Club and inspected the damage that had been caused by a shell which had fallen on it. The effects were most extraordinary.

"Look at that chair," remarked a friend, who was showing me over the débris. "Try to lift it," he added.

It was quite an ordinary-looking chair, but when I tried to lift it it refused to budge, and on closer inspection I found that it was pinned to the floor by a huge splinter of plate-glass which had gone straight through the seat and stuck in the floor, fixing it so firmly that it might have been bolted down. A leg had been blown off a billiard-table with such force that it had penetrated the thick slate of the table and had gone right through it. The walls of the building were bulging ready to totter, a condition caused not by being hit so much as by the terrific concussion caused by the explosion of the shell.

During the height of the trouble some of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company had to be rescued from a burning house where they had taken cover. There was no safe place where they could be

given shelter except the police-station, so it was to the police-station they went, and for three days they were kept there, being given the usual fare handed out to prisoners! That sounds rather dreadful, but I am not certain that they were not better off than we in the hotel, for we had only a limited supply of food in and this was running short, so that not only were we prisoners, but we were also hungry. We were very glad to get anything, as rations had to be kept very low.

While mentioning the curious effects of the shelling, I recall what to me seemed a rather funny incident at the time. One of the gallant young men of the D'Oyly Carte Company had to rescue a basket belonging to a lady. He found it lodged on the ledge of the room the floor of which had been blown out. He did some very agile climbing in order to get at the basket. He succeeded in doing so, and got it down. The landlady, noticing that her piano was lodged in the opposite end of the floorless room, remarked excitedly, "For heaven's sake go back and bring my piano down!"

Some very funny things happened towards the end of the week when the surrender began to take place. I was watching the scenes, when suddenly, at the far end of the street, I saw a door open and an old gentleman walk out wearing a frock coat and wrapped in a Union Jack. Now that the firing was over, he was very brave and very proud, and he marched off down the street singing at the top of his voice and doing his utmost to attract attention to himself.

Before proper military control could be estab-

lished there was a good deal of looting. I saw one woman walking down the street covered almost from head to foot with chains and watches which were dangling all over her, while she was stuffing gold and diamond-set rings down her stockings. On her head she wore a top hat, and as she made her way along the street heavily laden she was shouting, "Fire away, ye devils! Fire away!" It was like a cameo from the French Revolution that had suddenly come to life.

I saw another old woman laden with a sack run out of a boot shop and sit down at the foot of Nelson's Column in Sackville Street while she fitted on some of the boots she had looted. Apparently she could not find a size to fit her comfortably, so she left her sackful of boots while she ran back into the shop to find a right pair. While she was thus engaged some boys came along, saw the sackful of boots, lifted them and bolted.

When the old lady came back wearing a pair of brand new boots which squeaked every time she took a step she was so disgusted to find that her stolen boots had disappeared that she exclaimed, "Glory be to God! Would ye ever believe there were such thieves in Oirland!"

It was while I was very interested watching such things as this that there was a sudden banging on the door and a loud voice called out, "Open, in the King's name!"

There was a group of us in the room, and somebody opened the door. In walked an officer, who said, "There is a spy in this room!"



'BLACK CROW', 'RUNNING WOLF' AND 'STARLIGHT'



At that moment the sun was shining on my looking-glass which I had rigged up as a periscope. Apparently, according to what the officer said, someone was suspected of spying, signals having been seen to come from the hotel during the shooting, and I thought to myself, "Good lord, they think I'm a spy!"

I must have turned deathly pale, for everyone in the room looked at me.

At that moment the officer caught sight of me, and exclaimed, "Henry Lytton?"

"Yes," I said, "that is my name."

"I have a note for you," said the officer. "Fancy coming across you like this."

He handed me a note, which I opened and read. It was from my son, and said:

*Don't be nervous. I am guarding you!  
Harry.*

It was from my eldest son Harry who was in the Irish Rifles. He had come home on leave from France, but while enjoying himself in England was suddenly collared and sent over to Ireland for special duty. At the moment I read his note he was at the end of the street sniping.

But that only added to the trouble in which I thought I was suddenly plunged. I felt so nervous about this spy business that after reading the note I put it in my pocket and said to the officer, "Can I speak to you alone a moment?"

"Yes," he said.

A sentry was put on the door, and as the officer



and I left the officer remarked ominously, "No one is to leave this room!"

People whom I left behind in the room felt certain that I was a spy and that I was being taken out to be shot.

When we were outside the room alone, I told the officer: "I think I ought to tell you that perhaps I am the cause of all the trouble. I fixed up a little periscope by my window so that I could see what was happening in the street."

I was very apologetic and nervous over the whole matter, but the officer remarked quite brightly, "Oh, that's quite all right!"

Thus I was exonerated and able to go back into my room and watch from my window the remarkable scenes outside in the street where all sorts and conditions of men were surrendering to the military authorities. Groups were coming from all directions carrying white towels on sticks, and being lined up in the centre of the road before they were searched and marched off. It was a very impressive and dramatic sight, which was emphasized by the presence in my room of a "mystery woman".

She was a very beautiful woman, and was standing by my side at the open window. Tears were rolling down her cheeks, and while we stood there silently watching the drama down below I noticed that two officers came in and stood one on either side of her. I could not hear what they said, but after they had spoken to her she turned round, still crying copiously but silently, and went out of the room with them.

Some years later I was in the Dail in Dublin when I met Mr. Cosgrave and Mr. de Valera. While I was chatting a very beautiful lady who was standing nearby came up and said to me, "You don't remember me, Sir Henry?"

I said, "No, I do not, but I seem to have met you before."

"I am the woman who was arrested in your sitting-room as a spy," she said.

I have never to this day discovered who the lady was, but I do know this. She was a very charming woman, and I shall always be glad that I met her.

It was some years after the 1916 trouble in Ireland that I was reminded of a curious incident which happened almost on the first day that the shooting began. I was peeping out of my sitting-room window when I saw standing in a doorway on the opposite side of the road a very old friend of mine, Mr. Friary, the Coroner for Dublin. Not realizing how serious the trouble outside was, I thought to myself, "I must dash across and just say 'How do' to him."

I did dash across, and on the way heard the usual ping! ping! of bullets, one of which hit the tramlines very close to me. Fortunately I escaped.

"Whatever have you come across for, Harry?" asked Friary. "You must get back again at once."

I shook him hurriedly by the hand and dashed back to my hotel, once again arriving there safely.

Some years later, I was again in Dublin chatting to my old friend Friary in the Club, when

the coroner remarked to me, "Let me introduce you to some friends of mine, Harry."

He introduced me to two men, one of whom remarked to me, "I think we ought to meet, because I saved your life."

The other man said, "Yes, and I was going to kill you."

I said, "That's funny. What's the joke?"

"It happened in 1916," said the man who had told me he was going to kill me. "Do you remember running across the road while the sniping was going on?"

"Yes," I said, "I do. I ran across to speak to our friend here."

"Well," said the man, "I had got you marked from my corner of the street. I had my rifle aimed just over your heart and was going to shoot, when my friend here said, 'Don't shoot! That's Friary, the Coroner for Dublin, and the other one is old Ko-Ko.'"

So it happened that the man who a few years before had been ready to shoot me down as I ran across the street clinked glasses with me and drank my health.

Incidentally, I was with my friend Friary at an Irish race meeting one day, standing with him up in the grandstand looking at the tremendous crowd, when he remarked: "Do you know, Harry, what would make this a fine day? Start a fight over there. You would never see so many cracked skulls in your life."

"That's all right for you," I told him, "you're a coroner."

"Oh," he replied, "it would be great fun. All we would have to do would be to stay up here and just watch it."

That, I suppose, is an Irishman's sense of humour. But that is by the way.

The pot-shot which was taken at me as I ran across the street was not the only personal trouble I came near during those unhappy days. One day an order came round that anyone would be shot if found in possession of firearms of any kind, and we were told the hotel was going to be searched. I did not know of this order, or any word of it, for some reason it not having been passed on to me. Therefore I was innocent of any trick when a fellow came up to me and said, "I have a beautiful magazine revolver here. It is no good to me. You can have it for five shillings."

I had a look at it. It was a beautiful little weapon in a nice case, and as I thought five shillings was cheap I bought it. Having done so, I went downstairs and was walking among the crowd when I heard someone say, "Wouldn't it be awful if someone were found here with a gun?"

The question made me prick up my ears, and I found myself in a pretty fix when someone else in the crowd answered, "Yes, it would. He'd be shot without a doubt."

There I was, with this revolver in my pocket, and for the life of me I could think of no way of getting rid of it before the military authorities came to search the hotel. For ten minutes or so I walked up and down the lounge wondering what

I could do, and at last I went to the manager and explained. He, the good fellow, helped me out.

"That's all right," he said, "I'll put it in the safe. If it is found and any questions are asked I will explain that it has always been there."

That is where it went, and, so far as I know, that is where it remains. Incidentally, if the gentleman who sold me the revolver for five shillings under those circumstances finds his conscience worrying him I invite him either to send me the five shillings, which I will give to a deserving charity, or he can send the money to some charity himself.

Looking back to those anxious days one can recall many strange and sad sights. It was exceedingly tragic, for example, on the day that the trouble started to see three or four Lancers come riding down the street. Of course, they and their horses made a fine target for a volley of bullets fired from rifles that could not be seen but could be heard barking out and spitting death. The whole of the little cavalcade, except one horse, was shot to the ground, and I remember seeing the animal standing helplessly by the soldier who had fallen from its back, pushing its nose against the lifeless body, wondering why its master did not get up and remount. While it stood there it, too, was shot and fell to the ground dead. The terrible little heap remained there for many days, it being impossible for anyone to go out and get the soldiers to bury them, or to remove the carcasses of the dead horses.

When the shooting was all over, we had to

go to the Castle to get passes to go from one place to another. Feeling rather pleased with myself at the idea of being able to get out of doors without running the risk of being shot down, I thought I would go up to the Castle in state, so I took a jaunting-car. When I arrived at the Castle, I found that people were queuing up outside the gates all waiting for their passes, but I instructed my driver to wait for me.

Realizing that I should have to wait some time, I stood idly by the car with my hands in my pockets, when suddenly an officer came along and, looking at me, shouted, "Take your hands out of your pockets!"

He was so brusque and looked so fierce that I did so at once. Of course, the explanation was that anyone with his hand in his pocket might have been hiding a revolver and might have been tempted to shoot, so the military authorities were taking no risks.

I noticed, however, that the driver of my jaunting-car was standing at his horse's head with his hands in his pockets, and the officer had taken no notice of him.

"Why didn't he tell you to take your hands out of *your* pockets?" I asked.

"Oh," replied the driver in the very best Irish dialect I have ever heard, "they could see I was a gentleman."

I thought perhaps, after all, it would be better if I took my place in the queue and waited my turn with the others, or I might miss it altogether. So I did so, and I was surprised to experience the

very rough treatment the military authorities were meting out. If any man stood a little way out of the queue a soldier came along and pushed him roughly back, telling him to get in line, and to keep his hands where they could be seen.

Eventually I got inside the Castle and was shown into a room where an officer was taking particulars before passes were handed out. Following my turn in the queue I went up to him, and without looking up he barked out, "Yes?"

I began to say something, when he barked at me, "Name?"

"Lytton," I said.

The man stopped writing and looked up, as if something was slowly dawning on him.

"Henry?" he said.

"Yes."

"What! Old Ko-Ko!"

"That's right," I said brightly, "Henry Lytton of the Gilbert and Sullivan."

"Oh, really!" exclaimed the officer, who suddenly became very affable. "Sing us a song."

I did not feel very much like singing, but I thought very quickly and quoted an appropriate line or two from one of the operas :

"Cause. Have we not all Cause? Is not the world a big butt of humour into which all who will may drive a gimlet?"

That seemed to put the officer and his assistants in a very good humour, for I got my pass in double quick time, and with as little delay as possible I slipped back to England. It was good to get back.

I heard of one very sad incident after I got back to England. The victim was a dentist who lived in a house near Ball's Bridge. This poor fellow was wearing a white coat, as, of course, most dentists do, and after being in the house for several days he went out into his garden for a breath of fresh air. Of course his white coat made him a vulnerable target. Hardly had he reached the garden before a sniper had shot him dead.

When things like this were happening in Ireland all the time in those days, it seems rather strange to me that more than one friend to whom I have related some of the incidents should exclaim at the end of my story, "Oh, so you didn't play anything in Dublin on that occasion?"

My invariable reply to such remarks is, "No! When there is shooting, the people concerned have all the amusement they want, particularly if the shooting happens to be in Ireland."



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

AFTER talking about such serious and tragic things I think we might, with mutual advantage, turn to something a little more cheerful. A good many people question me about my hobbies. I have many, but I will confess at once that chief among them is the delight of fishing. I can hear your mental remark :

“Yes, I know ! A line, with a worm at one end and a fool at the other.”

But, believe me, fishing is nothing like that. I say so with great modesty, but if you are not a fisherman you have no idea of the skill required to land a fish. Of course, when I say a *fish*, I mean a salmon. Frequently I have had a fight with a big salmon taking, perhaps, the best part of an hour to land it, and at the end of the struggle I have been so exhausted, partly from sheer hard work and partly from excitement, that my friends have told me that I have been quite pale, and I have felt the need of a little stimulant, which, like all good fishermen, I usually carry in a small flask !

But to begin at the beginning. Think what it means to be able to throw a fly so that it lands on the water like a real one, even though it is one hundred times heavier.

If you can do that, you can say that you are

beginning to learn to fish, but you are no more than beginning, for when a fish is hooked it knows as much as you do, and more, about getting away, and it tries a different trick every time.

Usually its first idea is to leap out of the water and swish its tail, so that it breaks the hook and gets away. If you are not a good fisherman this might be successful. Incidentally, fish have been caught with little bits of hooks still sticking in their gills. The explanation of this is that a fish has been known to go down under the water to a rock and rub the broken end of the hook until it becomes smooth. That, you might say, is a fisherman's yarn, but I can assure you it is a fact.

Ah! I see you are beginning to get interested in the subject of fishing. Let me tell you some more about it.

I do not know whether fish have brains, but as a fisherman I do know that they are clever. They are up to all sorts of dodges to beat you even after you have hooked them. A fish, after it has got a hook in its gill, will sometimes dive down into the water and remain perfectly still and rigid, so that when you jerk the line gently you get the delusion that he is caught up under a rock. If you are not a skilled fisherman, you will jerk the line again so that it snaps, and the fish will go off happily down the river again, more than likely snapping its gills at you with quiet laughter.

But if you are a real fisherman you will not be taken in by this. You will hold your line very

gently, slip a tiny brass ring over it, let it run down the line under the water. If the fish is playing a joke on you, the ring will strike its nose and it will dart off immediately, going helter-skelter down-stream. You have to be prepared for this and let out your line so that you keep pace with it, but do not give it too much way, or it will double back again and snap your line, to get free in that way.

From the first rush, if it is not successful, a trout or a salmon will do one of a dozen tricks. He will always dash off down-stream if he can because the current will help him to speed along, sometimes running thirty or forty yards away. And, believe me, he goes like a torpedo. Then suddenly he will stop and double back again, and, since the only way to keep him on the hook is with a tight line, you have to keep pace with him and take in your line as fast as he doubles back.

If it is a twenty-pound fish, you are fighting a tiger; fighting all the time with a different pressure on the rod every moment.

But the thrill! What excitement! What happiness!

I once knew a millionaire who, so far as I could tell, had everything the world could give him, but he was unhappy and unhealthy. He had a yacht in which he had travelled round the world many times and could go anywhere and do anything. Yet he confessed to me he was bored.

"Lytton," he said to me one day, "tell me something I can do. I'm fed up. I've done hunting and shooting and travelling; I've seen all

the theatres I want to see ; I've been cruising in my yacht. In fact I seem to have done everything that is worth while. Tell me something I can do that has a thrill in it."

"Try fishing," I advised him.

He laughed heartily and echoed the word, "Fishing!" in a very scornful tone.

But I repeated to him, "Try it. Get some tackle," I told him. "Go up to Scotland and get someone to show you all the tricks of the game and then just try it."

But all he did was to echo again scornfully, "Fishing!"

Then I talked to him about it, told him some of the thrills and some of the skill required, and in a short time I had convinced him that there was more in it than he thought. He took my advice and went off to Scotland, where he learnt some of the arts of the game, and when I saw him some time afterwards he could not think of suitable words to express his gratitude.

"Lytton," he said, "I've never had such a good time for so little money in all my life. It's really a first-class sport. I had no idea. Thank you very, very much."

And so it is with you. If you are looking for a new sport, take my advice, and do try fishing. It's wonderful. But do not be misled into thinking that it is easy or simple. It is neither, and in addition to that it can be very strenuous. Once, I remember, I was fishing up in Scotland and was very fatigued at the end of a delightful day and happened to tell my host how tired I was.

"Tired!" he exclaimed. "That's nothing. Many a man has died landing a salmon! And," he added, "what a wonderful death!"

And he meant it. He was a true fisherman.

I do not know that I should care to die catching salmon, but I do know that it is a fine, exhilarating sport. Just imagine for yourself having a twenty-pound salmon on a hook and having to run with him down river, jumping over rocks and boulders as fast as you can go; all the time thinking of your line, letting it out or taking it in, so that it is not too loose or too tight; keeping up all the time with the living torpedo streaking through the water, first one way and then that, and you never knowing at what moment he is going to swish round and tear off in the other direction.

Sometimes a salmon has been known to run a line right out with one run straight down river, and to be going at such a pace that when you have come to the end of the line it just snaps off and your fish disappears. When that happens, in fisherman's parlance, the fish is known to have "broken you".

I have convinced a good many people that fishing is a real delight. Many a time a friend has said to me: "You can say what you like, Lytton, but you will never convince me that sitting on a bank with a fishing-rod, waiting for hours until that little float bobs once or twice and disappears, is the sort of holiday a man like you wants. The change is too drastic. You only get one month's rest a year and off you go to Scotland, fishing. You ought to take a real holiday."

“Ah, my friend,” I invariably reply, “when you talk like that how little do you know of fishing the wily trout—of fly-fishing in that wonderful country, Scotland! The thrills, the expectations, and the realization!”

I look forward to my fishing holidays with tremendous enthusiasm. I finish a show on Saturday night and in twenty-four hours I am North of Inverness in the midst of those awe-inspiring mountains, fishing eleven hundred feet up, having come north from Euston in a sleeper, which incidentally are now the latest and most modern form of luxury travelling, but which in the old days I used to call not sleepers, but wakers.

Cheery friends are always at the station to meet me on these occasions, and in a few minutes I am comfortably tucked in a powerful car, starting out for a twenty-five mile drive in the very heart of an ever-changing beautiful world of its own, where Nature runs riot and is bewildering in her daring contrasts—soft, almost downy moss covering hard, jagged rocks, mountain streams hidden for centuries by overgrowth of heather and bracken. The very journey to the loch is exhilarating.

Soon we arrive at our headquarters, a small, comfortable hotel; luggage is deposited, breakfast taken when the day is still yet young, and off we start for our first fishing expedition.

Now for the thrills!

Ruthran is the first loch where we are going to try our skill, so away we go full of hope: a fisherman is always full of hope. It may be raining,

but what does that matter? In the glory of it all it is almost pleasant to have the rain blowing in our faces; and all but our faces are well protected, since we are wearing oilskins, sou'westers and waders.

Now we are at the lochside. Our ghillie is waiting with the boat. All that now has to be done is to make up our fly casts. With our own knowledge, and the local opinion as to the fly to be taken, that is soon accomplished. There is a nice warm wind blowing from the west down the loch, and away we go to the other end to take full advantage of this. It does not take an expert to throw a fly, but, as I have remarked before, to make it light on the water as if it were the real thing needs a good deal of practice. But against the wind it is a different tale.

My ghillie once told me my flies dropped on the water like plugs of tobacco, but I got one back at him when I had made a particularly bad cast, for, before he could make any comment, I remarked, "Well, there goes pouch and pipe as well as the tobacco!"

But, despite my bad throw, I had extraordinarily good luck. I was at the stern and my first cast brought all the hopes that fishermen ever entertain stumbling over one another in one mad riot. A great break in the water—a splash, a tightening of the line by raising the hand from the wrist, and I had hooked my fish.

Now for it! Away went thirty yards of line in that first mad rush, even the hum of the reel adding to the excitement of it all. At the end of



PART OF A DAY'S CATCH





the first dash the captive fish suddenly doubled back, and the line reeled faster than I thought it possible ; then there was a sudden stop half-way, and for the first time I saw my fish. What a fine specimen he looked as he leaped out of the water, each time hoping to catch me napping and so snap the line! But I was ready for him. Each time the line was slack it was tight by the time he got back into the water again.

Excitement was growing apace!

Suddenly he was pulling again, making a sudden dive to the bottom—that old trick to make me think that my line had caught under a rock. Suddenly I feel the fish dart off again. I slacken my line and reel alternately with every move he makes. Gradually I bring him near the boat. The net is ready. He is coming along on top of the water. He looks as if the game is up. Now he is quite near the net, which is well behind him and down in the water. He has seen it! Off he goes for another fight, but this time of shorter duration.

Finally the struggle is over. This time he is over the net, which is soon lifted into the boat. The first fish of the day has been caught. It weighs only two pounds fourteen ounces, but it has taken fifteen minutes to play him round.

Now do you believe that fishing is a good sport and great fun? I have done my best to whet your appetite. If you would know what a good holiday is, try salmon fishing in Scotland, remembering always that towards the end of a wonderful day's sport you will be fighting your battles over

again, regretting the tremendously large fish which you hooked but did not manage to land.

Every Scottish loch has its own beauty and distinctive charm. I can see now in my mind's eye the wonderful glories of Tarf compared with those of Knockir; of Killin compared with Ruthran, but any one of them would overwhelm the man who usually seeks foreign countries before he has tried to learn the beauties of his own.

During one particular fishing expedition on which I went with two friends, the three of us netted 165 fine trout in two weeks. When I remember that, I remember also that each one had given the same thrill, the same expectation, the same joy of not being beaten.

I suppose nothing one could write about fishing would be complete without some of the usual stories, so I include one or two, although they should not be judged as typical "fishermen's yarns". However, here they are:

There is one old Admiral who frequently joined our expeditions whom I shall never by any chance forget. I do not believe he has ever stopped laughing since the day he was born—and he is eighty-two. He laughed heartily when he told us—and it must have been a tragedy at the time, for he was terribly fond of his wife—that the day before she died he took her some flowers.

"Sweet of you, my darling," she said, "but are you not just a little previous?"

"A sport till the end of her life!" roared the old Admiral as he told us this story, clapping his

knee heartily to emphasize his own appreciation of it.

There is another friend who is a little bit deaf and apt to be grumpy when he is tired, and the Admiral's great joke is to lean across to him and mouth some words without making a sound.

"Hey! What is that?" the deaf one asks.

He is mouthed at again, and the grumpy one goes to bed followed up the stairs by a peal of mirth from the Admiral.

Another great story of the Admiral's concerns one of his three maiden aunts. They all lived together, and while two were taciturn the other was extremely talkative, which was rather resented, and one day they told her about it in very pointed language.

"Well," she said, "I'll never speak again till I die."

She carried out this threat and wrote out her requests for anything she wanted. One day she was taken extremely ill and wrote on the slate that she would like a cup of tea. They ordered it for her, she drank it, and then said, "Thank you", and at that moment she died. The old Admiral thinks this is a great story.

"Deucedly pertinacious," he invariably remarks when he tells the story. "I admire the woman myself."

This same Admiral is commonly believed amongst his friends to have held a seat in the House of Commons for one session. He says he does not think much of the place, but according to what I hear he came away from it with quite

a reputation, since he is said to have made one speech.

It was brief and to the point.

In the middle of a debate he felt a draught down the back of his neck. It being rather late at night, and he being rather crotchety and tired, he stood up and cried :

“Shut that bloody window !”

Since he stood up to make this speech, it was reported in *Hansard*.

Personally, I cannot find it in *Hansard*, but I give you the story for what it is worth.

Another fishing story which I am fond of telling is, in my opinion, a good one, and it also happens to have been a personal experience of mine. It concerns an old ghillie.

We happened to be fishing one day with a rather peppery old gentleman, and our ghillie was a slightly stubborn individual who could not bear to have his instructions changed. On the other hand, the peppery old gentleman suffered from the disadvantage that he could not bear to be contradicted, and there is no doubt that people in his own office knew better than ever to disagree with him. One morning, however, the ghillie turned up with one rod. He was greeted immediately with, “I thought I told you to bring two.”

“You told me one,” was the reply.

“I told you two !” said the old man emphatically.

“You said one !”

By this time our friend was growing red in the face and becoming more and more angered

by the complete placidity of the ghillie. Meanwhile we were all standing on the edge of a river near a lot of rushes and reeds.

"I told you two!" shouted the peppery old man.

"You said one," replied the ghillie for the third time.

This was too much. Our friend completely lost his temper and, bounding forward at the ghillie, pushed him over backwards into the rushes. The mud was quite deep and he almost went under, but he poked up his head and, still with no change of expression, said, "You said one, but I'll never ghillie for you again."

Who was right I never knew, but I suspect the ghillie.

Speaking of ghillies, I am reminded of one fine old man who used to act for me sometimes when I went to Scotland to pursue my favourite pastime. He was a fine old chap, who saved every penny he could scrape together so that his son might become a doctor. The son was a good boy and made full use of the opportunities his father gave him. He passed through the Edinburgh hospital brilliantly and was one of the youngest and most famous surgeons in Scotland.

One day I asked the old man if he never went to see the boy.

"No," he replied. "He won't want to see us. He belongs to a different world now. But it is nice to hear from him, and he writes every week."

Later on, I was shown some of the young surgeon's letters, and in them it was quite obvious

that he badly wanted his father to go up and visit him, or to come home for a holiday, but the old ghillie would have none of it. He had got the idea into his head that if people knew that the boy's father was only an old ghillie it might injure him in his career. I tried to convince him that he was wrong, and eventually he did let the boy go down for a week's holiday. You should have seen how proud the old man was of him.

All these old Scotsmen who work on the lochs and mean so much to people like me who enjoy a day's fishing—are a fine race of men. They are hardy, usually dour, but most of them are great characters, and, of course, all of them are absolutely expert fishermen. It is, in fact, from the ghillies that I have learnt most of the arts of the game, and I am accordingly much indebted to them.

But that, I think, is enough about fishing, Let me talk about some of my other hobbies, hoping that they may interest you, if not as much as they do me, then sufficiently to enable you to enjoy reading my reminiscences.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

I HAVE many pastimes, most of which I find, although very enjoyable, have not the same thrill as fishing. Among these hobbies which provide one more with the satisfaction of achievement than with actual excitement I count painting and modelling in clay. The former I studied under the famous W. H. Trood many years ago when I was a boy. Trood was a great master, and, although I lay no claim to being a real artist, I am able to do enough with the brushes to turn out what to me at least is a picture, and I have spent many happy hours out in the open stretches and subsequently at home in a little studio turning out pieces of work in oils.

What I know of clay modelling I learned from Albert Toft, whom I used to watch at work. I have turned out a good many little things, but the one I like best of all, I think, is a tiny reproduction in clay of the hand of my daughter when she was a small child. I have it now in a cabinet in my sitting-room at home, and nothing would induce me to part with it. Perhaps I am unduly sentimental, but I frequently take it out and study the little dimples on the backs of the fingers and the little "bracelets" around the wrist. When I place it next to the bust of myself which Albert Toft did of me, and afterwards gave me as a present,



of course I realize that I am not a master at clay modelling, but the pastime affords me great pleasure, and it is a complete change from the strenuous hours I have to spend in the theatre.

If you are looking for something that will pass away a few leisurely hours perfectly, I can confidently recommend clay modelling, since it at once exercises the mind and the fingers without being a strain on either; even though you are not an expert, if you are adept with your fingers you will find that after practice you will be able to turn out some quite passably good and, at any rate, interesting bits.

Another hobby in which I have indulged for the past forty years at least is that of papier maché modelling. I make all the "folly sticks" which I carry as Jack Point in the Gilbert and Sullivan opera. I find that if I have a "folly stick" made of paper it is lighter to carry, easier to wield delicately, and, moreover, lasts longer, since pieces do not get chipped off it in the hurly-burly of carting luggage about when on tour.

I am rather fond of my "folly sticks". I build them up piece by piece with minute portions of tissue paper, moulding the features of the face with tiny bits of paper, building it up layer upon layer. The eyes I take from my daughter's dolls. She is now grown up and doesn't need them, so I claim a father's privilege of making use of them. I am afraid that if one of these days she ever looks up her old nursery toys she will be rather surprised to find that every one of her dolls is now completely blind!





CECIL DE MILLE AND THE LATE ERNEST TORRENCE  
WELCOME ME TO HOLLYWOOD

Having built up the features of the head and face with tissue paper in this way and glueing layer upon layer, I bake them in order to harden them off and then paint them carefully, and finally varnish them. Some of them I have also covered with a thin gauze before varnishing in order to make them last longer.

Making use of my knack for modelling with tissue paper in this way, I once played a joke on an actor who was appearing with me in *The Mikado*. During one of the scenes in this opera, when Nanki-Poo tries to draw a sword, I have to struggle with him to prevent him from doing so. On this occasion I modelled half a finger in papier maché and baked and painted it so that it looked very real. That evening when I went on the stage for this struggle I took the half a finger with me and, during the mix-up, suddenly dropped the half-finger on the floor, at the same time doubling up my middle finger to make it look as if half of it were missing.

The joke worked. Poor Nanki-Poo saw the half finger lying on the floor, went suddenly pale under his make-up, and whispered to me with terror in his voice, "Good God, Harry! What have I done?"

I do not know what would have happened to poor Nanki-Poo had not the audience helped me out. To my partner on the stage the thing was so real that anything might have resulted, but the audience happened to see that the whole thing was a joke and began to laugh, whereupon Nanki-Poo was so relieved that he was able to

carry on without any mishap, which might very easily have occurred through my rather foolish practical joke.

While speaking about *The Mikado* I should like to mention the late Charles Ricketts' setting for that opera.

Ricketts had studied in Japan and had a very deep knowledge of Japanese costume and art. His idea was to get away from the Europeanized Japanese dress of musical comedy and to capture the real atmosphere of old Japan. He certainly achieved this in his beautiful setting for *The Mikado*: many of his original drawings for this have been acquired by the National Arts Collections Fund and are being exhibited by them in the galleries of the big cities and at exhibitions.

Ricketts followed closely the costume designs of Japan, but he allowed himself some artistic liberties; as for instance in the alluring hats worn by the little maids from school—such hats being quite traditional, but worn only by dancing-girls. Also in the suggestion of a "big black block" of the head-dress I wear as "Ko-Ko" in the first act and the delightful badge on my sleeves made of two executioners' axes back to back. More important, he dressed his "Mikado" rather as the "Shogun" or principal representative of the Emperor than as the Emperor himself. The difference may not be great to the European eye, but of great importance to a Japanese, whose feelings might well be hurt, Ricketts thought, by seeing *The Mikado*—a sacred personage in Japan—accurately represented on the stage.

Yet another of my hobbies—a very quiet one, from which I gather much pleasure—is that of collecting old pewter. I have been collecting for many years and have some very nice pieces as a result, which I have gathered up cheaply. Half the fun of collecting anything, of course, is first of all searching for knick-knacks in second-hand shops, then getting them cheaply, subsequently persuading yourself that you have made a great bargain by picking up something that is really valuable for a few shillings.

Personally, I must confess that I am under no delusion that I have ever made a really valuable “find”, but nevertheless I have done very well on one or two occasions. Once I spotted in the window of an old curiosity shop an interesting-looking mug that was painted pink. I was so intrigued by it that I went in and examined it and soon discovered by its weight that it was a pewter pot which somebody had painted with enamel. I bought it, took it home and cleaned it, to discover that not only was it a genuine Georgian piece but, to my surprise, had engraved upon the side of it my own initials, “H. A. L”.

Who the original “H. A. L.” was I do not know, but it was a curious thing that I should have found it quite accidentally, and then to discover according to the initials on it that it belonged to me already!

Once I did do a little bargaining. It went on at intervals for ten years, at the end of which I got a shilling knocked off the original price asked! That, I think, is a record to be proud of! The

object of this piece of very smart business on my part was a rather nice clock, which now stands on the mantelpiece in my dining-room. It particularly appealed to me because it was composed of a group of strolling players just as they were years ago when I first entered the theatrical profession. Arranged on either side of the clock itself are Columbine, Harlequin, Pierrot, the players' luggage, drum, and a little monkey perched on top—all together a very charming and, to me, a somewhat sentimental group. I came across it accidentally one day when strolling down a back street. It was in the window of a second-hand shop. I went in and asked the proprietor how much he wanted for it.

"Twenty-five shillings," he said.

Whether I was very poor at the time, or whether I felt that twenty-five shillings was too much money, I cannot remember, but I know I refused to pay it, remarking that I would come back when he had decided to ask a lower price for it.

Truth to tell, soon after I left the shop I had forgotten all about the clock. Quite ten years later I happened to be passing the end of the same street, when, for some inexplicable reason, the fact that I had seen a clock there occurred to me, and I thought that as a matter of interest, having a spare half-hour, I would go along to see if the clock were still there. To my surprise it was in exactly the same place in the window, so I went in and again asked the proprietor how much he wanted for it.

He looked at me, looked at the clock, scratched his head, and replied, "Twenty-four bob, guv'nor."

"Good!" I said. "I'm glad I didn't buy it ten years ago; I've saved a shilling!"

The old shopkeeper did not appear to appreciate the joke very much, or to know what I was talking about, so I recalled to him the time ten years previously when I had endeavoured to buy the clock and he had asked twenty-five shillings for it. His reply was a typical one for a second-hand dealer.

"Well, guvnor," he said, "I think it's worth twenty-five bob. You've got a bargain."

So I came away convinced that I had got a bargain, and now it is cleaned up and I look at it gracing my dining-room mantelpiece I am inclined to think that he was right. In any case, I am more than satisfied with it, and I am glad to say the clock not only goes, but keeps perfect time.

Most of my friends know that I was a motorist, and the majority of them will be surprised to know that I can claim to be one of the earliest of the motorists in this country. In fact when motors first came in I was the proud owner of a car which was propelled by a steam engine. They were the days of motoring, believe me. My steam car was a beautiful one, all painted out in virginal white, and I was amazingly proud of it.

I cannot say that I was a motorist in the days of the old red flag which a man carried before all mechanically propelled vehicles, but I did commence driving a week after the law was passed abolishing this old custom.



Sitting high up on the front seat of my white steam-engine motor-car I remember that one day I was very excited because I drove all the way from Turnham Green to Kew Bridge, a distance of at least three miles.

It was a great run, but just as I got into the traffic at Kew Bridge and was beginning to feel mightily proud of myself, the car coughed, kicked, and stopped. Of course, a crowd soon gathered round to look at the novelty, for motor-cars in those days were certainly novelties, particularly one that happened to be owned by a private individual. Foremost in the crowd, of course, was the blue-coated policeman. While I was trying to discover the cause of its ignominious breakdown I was the subject of much wit from the errand boys and men and women who looked upon motor-cars as huge jokes.

All sorts of rude things were said loud enough for me to hear, so that I was rapidly becoming very embarrassed, and, truth to tell, I knew so little about motors in those days that I hadn't the foggiest idea where to begin to look for the trouble, but as the proud possessor of a motor-car I had to put up a show of pretending to know, and also of trying to convince the crowd that nothing serious had happened and that we would be off again in a moment or two.

Unfortunately, I was unable to find any means of making the car start again, and I was rapidly becoming more and more embarrassed by the crowd, particularly as the congestion which I caused was holding up all the other traffic.

Suddenly I had a brainwave. The old steam engine was spurting and spitting all over the place. Of course I knew it was quite safe—or at least as safe as motors could be in those days—so I suddenly jumped back, turned round to the crowd, and shouted, “Hi, look out! This thing might blow up any minute!”

Much to my amusement the crowd soon went back to a respectable distance, and I was highly delighted to see the rather supercilious policeman, who had been well in the foreground, get farther away than anybody else—well behind the crowd!

I do not remember exactly what happened eventually. I rather believe I had to get someone to tow me home. Anyway, the conclusion of a very triumphant run was, I know, a rather humble one; but, despite this, I subsequently wrote to a friend to tell him all about the remarkable journey I had made.

*You will be surprised, my dear friend, to hear that I have driven from Turnham Green Church to Kew Bridge in my car, I wrote.*

The information was in the nature of a brag, I confess, and my friend rather put me in my place when he replied hastily by telegram:

*Congratulations! How did you get back?*

Nothing in the world would have induced me to admit to him that I was towed back, but even had I done so I should have been given full credit for having driven non-stop for three miles, for in

those days such a thing was a tremendous achievement.

Apparently spurred on by my great success, my friend purchased for himself the very latest thing in motor-cars, and when I think of it now I cannot help laughing. It was in the nature of a mechanically propelled bathchair, but both he and I thought it was a very elegant turn-out.

On the day that he bought it he very proudly asked me to drive with him, and I accepted with alacrity, for to drive in such a vehicle in those days was to prove to the whole world that I moved in the height of fashion.

But alas, pride on this occasion was riding for a terrible fall!

Some of my readers may remember the old "Peace and Plenty" bakers' carts which used to go round the streets delivering bread. I can see the marvellous picture painted on the back panels of these carts in my mind's eye. There was a beautiful woman in red grasping a bouquet of corn in her folded arms. I remember this picture for a very good reason, for, while we were butting along at a good ten or twelve miles an hour, I suddenly became aware of the fact that we were overtaking a "Peace and Plenty" bakers' van, and that the beautiful lady was growing bigger and bigger as we raced on apace rapidly catching her up.

"You're going at a pretty good lick, old man," I remarked to my friend, grasping the side of my high seat tighter and tighter every moment, while beads of perspiration stood out on my brow.



RONALD COLMAN, AN OLD FRIEND, AUTOGRAPHED THIS PICTURE FOR ME BLIORL  
I LEFT THE FAMOUS FILM CITY



"Yes," replied my friend in a suspiciously quavering voice, "she does go, doesn't she?"

"Yes," I said, "but we're getting into traffic, old man. Don't you think you had better slow down a bit?"

"I can't," he said.

"But you must," I said; "it's dangerous! We'll hit something."

"The darn thing won't stop, I tell you," confessed the driver, and at that moment, just as I was contemplating taking a flying leap from the box into the gutter, I suddenly landed head first into the lap of the beautiful lady on the back of the "Peace and Plenty" van. Fortunately I have a very hard skull, for I barged straight through the back panel of the van and buried my face in a sea of hot rolls. To this day I can remember the appetizing smell of them.

Before I could extricate myself, the old baker sitting on the front of his horse-van had pulled up, scrambled down, and come round to me where my feet were sticking in the air, shouting, "This will cost you a pretty penny, my fellow!"

Just exactly what the "pretty penny" amounted to I do not remember, but I do know that the back of the van was completely stove in and my friend's brand new motor-car was very badly wrecked. In fact, I do not think it ever went on the road again.

In the comparatively early days of motoring I even drove on the racing track at Brooklands, and many a time I have whizzed round the concrete basin at over one hundred miles an hour.

Just for the fun of the thing, and for the thrill I should get out of it, I used to act as mechanic and assistant to the Japanese racing motorist O'Kura. The cars used for racing on the track in those days were oil-pressure ones, and all the poor old mechanic had to do was to sit on the seat next to the driver, clinging on as best he could with one hand and being blinded by oil and grit while he pumped furiously with the other hand to keep the machine going.

Usually on these occasions I could not see or hear, and certainly O'Kura could not hear, for goodness knows I shouted at him frequently enough. As he went round lap after lap, increasing his pace each time, I invariably became more and more frantic and screamed at him at the top of my voice begging him to stop, but he just drove on unperturbed, pressing the machine to the last inch of mileage it would go.

On one occasion, I remember, O'Kura was out for a challenge cup which he was absolutely determined to win. I was perched up by his side hanging on to my seat as best I could and pumping away furiously, wondering all the time what was going to happen next, being quite certain in my mind that we were going to crash, so fast were we going. After the first two or three laps my excitement changed to deep alarm, and I shouted at him to stop, for heaven's sake, before I was thrown off! I was absolutely blind from the flying oil and choked with the dust, but despite this I managed to shout.

Finally the flag waved for the last time and

O'Kura, having won the race, began to slow down. Finally he stopped and, turning to me, smiled broadly, showing his white teeth, and said in a most irritating manner, "Were you talking to me, my friend?"

Fancy being asked that after I had shouted myself hoarse at him. His reward was a big challenge cup; mine was, "Thank you very much. We did very well."

Nevertheless it was a great thrill which, looking back, I would not have missed for anything, and in fairness to O'Kura I must add that he did subsequently send me a present in the form of a pair of gold cuff-links with initials engraved on them.

Remembering the thrills of my Brooklands days, I often wonder what it would feel like to drive beside Sir Malcolm Campbell when he reduces space and time infinitely, tearing across the sands at Daytona at a faster pace than anyone has ever driven in the world on land before. I am not detracting from Sir Malcolm's very fine driving ability and his extraordinary bravery and pluck, but I honestly do not believe that he gets more thrills out of his driving that wonderful car, "The Bluebird", than I did out of driving my original white-painted steam-driven car from Turnham Green Church to Kew Bridge, or from being whirled round the track at Brooklands in the days when even racing cars stopped if you discontinued pumping the life stream into them.

The difference in motoring and in motor-cars that has come about since the days when I first



became a motorist are really wonderful, and it seems impossible that such changes could have come about in one man's lifetime; they have, in fact, come about in much less than that—in twenty-five or thirty years.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

WRITING about motoring, I am inevitably reminded of the sad and tragic death of Miss Bertha Lewis, one of the most brilliant members of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Naturally, of course, I felt, and do feel, her death very personally, and I refer to it with sadness in my heart, and only because many among my friends have asked me from time to time exactly how the fatal accident which caused her untimely end occurred.

As you know, she died in May 1931. No one could pay Miss Bertha Lewis too high a compliment as an artist or as a woman, and I am at a loss to describe how I feel when I find myself referring to her.

I was driving the car in which she met her death. We were nearing Cambridge, about six miles away, on the Huntingdon Road, driving through a blinding rainstorm on an asphalt surface which was very slippery. We were travelling at not more than twenty miles an hour, when suddenly the car got into a front-wheel skid.

I had been driving motor-cars practically all my life, and I am able to say that I had never had an accident before, although, naturally, I had experienced skids on the road. On each other occasion, however, I had got out of them

successfully. Even on this occasion I had sufficient control of the car when it skidded to right it again, and I thought everything was well, when my two front wheels apparently came into contact with a patch of thick crude oil on the road. I examined the spot afterwards, and there seemed to be a pool of oil left by a heavy motor-lorry that had pulled up by the roadside.

The next thing I knew was that the car had gone down an embankment, had turned clean over, completing a somersault on the way down, finally righting itself and coming to a standstill the right way up. What part of the roof of the car that was left was covered with turf from the bank. Poor Bertha Lewis was unconscious and taken away to a nursing-home, where she died four days afterwards. I had two cracked ribs, a bent rib, a crushed leg, and what subsequently turned out to be a crushed kidney.

The accident, of course, was inevitable, and I think I may justly say that no driver, no matter how experienced or how careful he was, could have avoided a very serious crash under the same circumstances. That, however, does not alter the fact that it robbed the world of a very fine character in my old friend and colleague, Miss Bertha Lewis. Her death was a great and irretrievable loss to all who knew her, both on and off the stage.

Since the accident, which, apart from the injuries I received in it, affected me very considerably, I have given up motoring—a hobby which I had pursued with much pleasure for the

greater part of my life. Could it have prevented the death of Bertha Lewis, I would have given up motoring years sooner. But these things happen in life, and one can neither anticipate them nor alter the results once they have happened. Nevertheless, and naturally, I suppose, I feel I shall never be able to drive a motor-car again, not that I have lost my nerve, but because while motoring I lost a dear friend whose death I must always mourn.

I was in a nursing-home getting mended for a considerable time after the accident, and when I left I thought that I was quite recovered physically. Nine or ten months afterwards, however, kidney trouble developed. At about Christmas-time, 1931, I began to get very severe pains in my back, which gradually became more and more acute. During Christmas, however, I rested, and after the holiday I carried on on tour at Birmingham and Sheffield. At Birmingham I became so acutely affected by the pains in my back that I saw a specialist, who ordered me to be X-rayed, as a result of which it was decided that an operation was necessary.

Here I should like to confess that I consider myself a complete coward so far as operations are concerned, so much so that I had always decided subconsciously in my mind that if ever I was told I should have to undergo an operation I should refuse to do so. I tell you this for a particular reason. The operation was a marvellous success, and I knew nothing whatever about it, thanks not only to the skill of the surgeon, but

also to the discovery of a wonderful drug which was given me even before the anæsthetic was administered.

Preparations for, and the thoughts of, an operation, I know from my own experience, instil into the hearts and minds of thousands of people a terrible fear and dread, but let me tell any such people who may be reading this book that their dreads are unfounded; there is nothing to fear and nothing to worry about, so marvellous is this new drug and so wonderful is modern surgery.

An operation for a crushed kidney, of course, is a very serious one, and I was exceedingly upset about it. Within my own mind I thought I should die long before the operation started; in fact, I was so upset that I told my surgeon, the other doctors, the nurse, and all my friends, that everyone was in for a very bad time. I could not help it, but fear gripped me.

Now let me tell you of what actually happened. It being decided that I should have to undergo the operation, I came to a London nursing-home, and while waiting for it I am afraid I constantly told the nurse who was in attendance on me that I should never be able to go through it. Presently my surgeon came in and said quite quietly: "I think perhaps you had better have just two of these; they will make you feel nice and quiet and help you to collect your nerve." At the same time he gave me two pills. After I took them the nurse sat by my side stroking my brow and trying to calm me. Gradually I went off into a beautiful sleep.



RUTH CHATTERTON IS ONE OF THE LEADING LIGHTS OF THE  
FILM COLONY IN HOLLYWOOD



Some time later, when I regained consciousness, the nurse was still sitting by my side stroking my brow and I was nearly in a panic.

"For God's sake, nurse," I entreated, "tell them I must get this operation over! I cannot stand the suspense much longer. I want to get it over and done with, or I shall die with contemplation of it. It's too horrible to think about. What time is it?"

The nurse went on calmly stroking my brow.

"What time do you want it to be?" she asked me.

"Any time so long as the operation is over," I said.

She smiled at me.

"Well," she said, "it is now half-past nine to-morrow. The operation is all over. It has been very successful and we are very pleased with you. All you have to do is just to rest, and, if you can, go to sleep and forget all about it."

I cannot describe the relief that that statement meant to me. There it was—the operation was all over and done with, and I swear I knew nothing more about it than what I have described, even though it was a major operation.

What had happened was this: When I was given the drug to send me into a sleep, the nurse sat by my side stroking my brow. That was the last thing I remembered her doing before I lost consciousness. After I had gone off, the doctors had administered an anæsthetic. I had been taken to the operating theatre and operated on, and brought back to bed. Then the nurse—dear



kind soul, of whom I cannot say too much in her praise—must have watched me as a cat watches a mouse, waiting for me to show the least sign of regaining consciousness. As soon as I did so she stepped quietly to my side, and when my mind began to work the first thing of which I was conscious was her stroking my brow again—the thing that she had been doing when I last remembered anything at all.

That, of course, saved me any shock of waking up and wondering where I was, or what had happened to me. The illusion which she had brought about in my mind had killed space, time and everything for me, and I was under the impression that nothing had happened between whiles.

I was told that the pill responsible for this ethereal condition was a recent discovery.

This has a similar effect to the much discussed drug which produces "Twilight sleep".

The sublime feeling of nonchalance and the freedom from apprehensive—and ever ghastly—fear that so frequently precedes an operation which resulted from this simple treatment should commend it to the medical profession as a very important factor in the elimination of shock.

The curious feature about all this to the layman is the fact that one does not necessarily lose consciousness. On the other hand one frequently gives quite rational answers to questions without having any recollection of this afterwards.

If anyone who fears an operation half as much as I feared mine can read this, knowing that it is the truth, then I feel I may have done a little

to help. The only horrible thing about an operation is the fear, and if you know there is nothing of which to be afraid then an operation becomes a simple matter, which you can safely leave to the skilled hands of the surgeons, who know exactly what to do for you.

After the operation was over, my surgeon came to my bedside and, speaking to another doctor who was there, said: "And this is the man who was a coward; this is the man who warned us that we were going to have a terrible time with him, but at the last moment was the calmest and coolest of any of us.

"I don't like the sort of man who comes in with great bravado, and says, 'Do you what like with me, I don't care!'" added the surgeon. "He is the sort of man who collapses at the last moment and gives us a lot of trouble."

Personally, I am of the opinion that there is a Something that comes to our aid in all times of real crisis during our lives; Something that helps us through all our trials and tribulations, so that when we look back on them they do not seem to be as bad as we believed they would be.

Before leaving this matter of my operation I have to record a remarkable thing about myself. When the doctors operated on me they made the extraordinary discovery that instead of having two kidneys I had three. This "curiosity" about me made me an object of great interest among the surgeons, and I was told that although a man with three kidneys had been known before,

no one in that state had been discovered this century.

After the operation I found that I was an object of great interest among all sorts of doctors and surgeons who came, not only to hear about my extra kidney, but to have a look at the marvellous piece of carving the surgeon had carried out on my back. Several times a day the nurse would come along, smile at me very sweetly and say, "Turn over to let the doctor see," and the poor patient had to turn over to have his scar admired, while the surgeons stood by rubbing their hands with satisfaction and murmuring, "A very pretty job. Very nicely done. Congratulations."

"It's all right for you," I told them, "but it's my back."

"It's all right," they told me. "Even you will admit that your back is all the better for it."

When I was well enough to leave the nursing-home I went to recuperate at Eastbourne, where I stayed at the Mostyn Hotel. Here they were so attentive and made me so comfortable that my return to perfect health was considerably hastened.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

I HAVE sometimes been asked what was the most impressive moment of my life that I could remember. Undoubtedly it was when I knelt before His Majesty the King at Buckingham Palace to be dubbed a Knight Bachelor. Right from the time my car in which I was to drive to the Palace arrived at my house I experienced a feeling of setting out on a great adventure: the great unknown. Nothing in my life could compare with it. I cannot describe the feeling I had when I knew that I had to go before the King and to be at close quarters with him. Anyone who has the great honour of knighthood conferred upon him must, I think, experience this thrill, which is one of exhilaration and excitement combined with awe.

Like thousands of other loyal citizens, I have struggled many times in the pouring rain, and have been jostled by kindly, but burly policemen, in order to get a glimpse of the back of His Majesty's head; in fact, on more than one occasion I had even climbed the railings in order to get a glance at the King-Emperor when he has been driving by in his carriage.

When I arrived at the Palace I was shown into a large ante-room which has since become fairly familiar to me owing to the fact that I have been

through it many times to attend a Royal garden-party. There was quite a crowd of people already in the room who, like me, had been summoned to the Palace to receive an honour from the King. Everybody, of course, was very correctly dressed and exhibiting the very best behaviour. The feeling of tension which was in the air was, I suppose, natural to the occasion ; everyone there was feeling more than a little overawed, but one of the gentlemen-in-waiting relieved the tension almost as soon as I entered.

He spotted me, hurried across, and greeted me quite cheerily with, "Hullo, Ko-Ko !"

That remark quickly broke the tension and the silence in the ante-room. The gentleman-in-waiting and I soon began to talk about the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, which, even in Buckingham Palace, act as a sort of charm. Gradually the other gentlemen, who had been standing about wondering where to put their hands and what to say, gathered round and there was quite a little debate on the other popular operas. One gentleman there was kind enough to recall the number of times he had seen me play, and we counted the different parts in which he had seen me act.

One thing I feel I must say in connection with this honour which the King so graciously conferred upon me. It is this : When I was first informed that I was to be made a Knight Bachelor, while I was actually at Buckingham Palace before His Majesty, and on many many occasions since, the question has arisen in my mind, Why was I, Henry Lytton, the wandering minstrel, given

such a wonderful reception? When I think about it, I feel it cannot be true, despite the fact that many kind friends have done their best to convince me that it is. Among these friends who have been so very kind to me I would like to mention particularly Sir Noel Curtis Bennett, who, soon after I was created a Knight Bachelor, organized a luncheon in my honour to commemorate the occasion. Among those present was that great orator and statesman Mr. David Lloyd George, who so kindly stood up and said many generous things about me and my work as a member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Usually I do not suffer from "nerves", but I shall never forget when I had to get up on my feet and make a speech in reply to all the very generous things that had been said about me. If, in my embarrassment then, I did not thank all my friends adequately, I would like to do so now.

Before His Majesty arrived in the room adjoining the ante-room, everyone who was waiting to receive an honour was shown exactly what to do upon entering the King's presence. There was, in fact, what I might describe as a dress rehearsal, the gentleman-in-waiting going through every detail of what each of us would have to do on being called. Several of those waiting were asked to enact just what they would have to do. But I remember the gentleman-in-waiting who was superintending the rehearsal remarked pleasantly to me, "Oh, there is no need to rehearse you, Lytton. You are used to rehearsals and I can see you have grasped it."

Presently, although no announcement had been made, there was a general hush upon the assembly. His Majesty had arrived in the room adjoining that in which we were waiting.

One by one our names were called and we passed through to kneel before the King. When my name was called, I entered to see His Majesty standing on a low daïs with Mr. J. R. Clynes, who was then Home Secretary, on the right side of him. Acting according to "rehearsal" instructions, I walked forward, bowed to His Majesty, walked forward again, bowed, and then knelt on a cushioned stool placed just in front of the King. The stool, I noted, was a curious one, with a handle on the left side to steady you as you knelt.

No sooner was I on my knee than the King was handed a double-handled sword which, I believe, is the same one that was used to knight Sir Walter Raleigh. His Majesty placed the sword first on one shoulder and then over my head on to the other, and said, "Arise, Sir Henry."

After conferring the honour, the King chatted for a moment or two with each recipient, and I was struck by His Majesty's remarkable memory. I heard him speak to one old gentleman who had received an honour immediately before me. To my surprise I heard the King ask, "Do you still play golf?"

"No," the old gentleman replied.

"That is a pity," remarked the King. "You should keep up your golf."

How very extraordinary that His Majesty,

with the multitudinous duties he has to carry out connected with the State, should remember that one old gentleman, among the thousands of people with whom he comes into contact, played golf.

Another thing which impressed me about His Majesty was his promptitude. The investiture ceremony, we had been informed, would commence at 10.30 in the morning, and it was on the stroke of 10.30 that His Majesty arrived in order to confer the honours.

Another thing which surprised me a little was the very short time the ceremony took. I entered Buckingham Palace just before 10.30 in the morning, and by 11.15 I had left the Palace. As I came out I remember I was photographed with my hat on at a very rakish angle. When I went into the Palace three-quarters of an hour earlier my "topper" was placed very correctly on my head!

I think I have mentioned elsewhere that I consider myself a coward. Despite this fact I find that the honour of being a Knight Bachelor carries with it duties which, under certain circumstances, might require a terrific lot of pluck, for I have to be ready to lay down my life for the King and to stand in front of His Majesty should anyone attempt to attack him. That, of course, I should do readily, as every true and loyal citizen would.

Quite an incidental, but to me, at any rate, very interesting thing in connection with the investiture was that while I was waiting in the ante-room, talking about the Gilbert and Sullivan



operas, I met a number of gentlemen from all parts of the country, and I think there was not one among the group who had not seen the D'Oyly Carte Company playing either in London or in the Provinces.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

QUITE a number of my friends on various occasions, knowing that for fifty years now my life has been one of practically continual travelling, have asked me two questions which I think are pertinent regarding an actor's life. They are :

Whether I get tired of travelling ; and

Whether I do not get bored with hotel life.

The answer to the first question is definitely no. I love travelling, but, of course, I am prepared to admit that the pleasure is one which has varying degrees. A journey across America, for instance—particularly on one of those gigantic night trains, which stop and start unexpectedly—is not so much travelling as we in England know it as an unhappy experience and a necessity. I cannot think offhand of anything more fatiguing.

Living on an American train for two or three days, which one frequently has to do when making long journeys across the American Continent, is to me nothing short of an endurance test which calls upon real reserves of energy and of patience. You go rattling on and on for mile after mile with night following on day with a monotonous regularity, and nothing to look at the whole time quite frequently but the rolling prairie—scenery which is calculated to pall very quickly after the first novelty has worn off.

What a night journey in one of these trains is like I have described elsewhere. You are not so much a passenger as a human shuttlecock in a seemingly never-ending game of badminton. After a weary day pacing up and down the train, sitting in the observation car, reading, chatting, and perhaps having a drink or two with one or two friends, you turn into your bunk innocently believing that you can have a good night's sleep and wake up in the morning with quite a large portion of the journey completed.

But you have that illusion only once—the first time you make a long train journey. The bunk, I admit, is very comfortable when you get into it, but of course you feel a little strange and therefore unable to sleep immediately. Presently you get accustomed to your strange bed, settle down and begin to doze. Then—bang! rattle! bang!

You wake up with a start believing that the end of the world has come about, or that an earthquake has suddenly occurred, but gradually you become aware of the fact that nothing worse has happened than that the train has stopped! So you turn over and try to sleep again after having regained a normal position in the bunk, for the stopping of the train has shot you down to the bottom end. Barely have you closed your eyes, and started to doze, when there is another minor earthquake and this time you are shot to the other end of the bunk, where your head brings up against the woodwork with a resounding crack. All that has happened this time is that the train has started again.

Having been thoroughly disturbed, you then lie awake for perhaps an hour, perhaps longer, listening to the clank, clank, clank of the huge wheels as they go over the metals, the train meanwhile gathering speed, swaying from side to side. If you are very tired and very determined you go off to sleep again eventually, but not for long. The engine-driver decides to have another little game of badminton with you, and you shoot first to one end of the bunk and back again to the other. And so it goes on throughout the night, so that in the morning you get up weary of mind and of limb, ready enough to stretch your legs and rub a few bruises sympathetically. After that, you have breakfast and another day of comparative boredom, during which you have the dread at the back of your mind of the oncoming night.

A train journey in England, even the very longest one it is possible to make, is a joy compared with this American travel. Not only are the English trains much better, but the English railway tracks are infinitely beyond comparison. A railway journey in England is like riding on a cloud after once you have had the experience of a long journey in the United States.

As to the second question about hotel life, I am not certain what my answer would be. Staying in as many hotels as I do, my whole life seems to have become one Grand Hotel. I have lived in nearly all the best-known hotels in the biggest towns of the United Kingdom and in a good many of the famous hotels in America and

Canada. This being so, I suppose I have become accustomed to hotel life, but in England it is not all that it could be in what I might call the second-class hotels. For reasons of economy I was forced to live in the latter for many years in my earlier days. A first-class British hotel is among the best in the world, but in some of the smaller ones in which I had to stay when I was on the low rungs of the ladder of success the managers, I discovered, did not look upon the people who utilized their establishments as human beings so much as numbers.

If someone called on you and the clerk in the inquiry office was not certain whether you were in or not, a page was immediately sent round all the rooms, calling, not your name, but a number.

That, I suppose, did not matter very much, and perhaps it was just as well to have a number called rather than your name, for you did not want everyone in the hotel to know who you were. Not, of course, that you are ashamed of being yourself so much as not wanting to advertise yourself or your presence.

In making this criticism that some hotels look upon you as a number more than as an individual I am referring to the general impression one gets through being forced to live in hotels that, for want of a better description, I will call the cheaper ones.

As an actor touring the provinces it has generally been a Sunday when I have arrived in a town and have gone to an hotel to ask for a room. What happens? Usually the reception

clerk is a girl who is not only tired but feels that she should not be on duty at all. The result is that in her own good time she looks up and inquires, "Yes?"

You ask almost humbly if you may have a room, and the reply is that the receptionist is not certain; the hotel is rather full, but she will see what she can do.

Incidentally, when you have been given a room, you discover that the hotel, far from being full, is usually almost empty. That, however, is by the way. Having been told that you can be accommodated, in such a way that you gather the impression that you are being granted a great favour, you are given the number of a room and a key, and then, before you slink off behind the heels of a page boy who shows you the way, you have to sign a register, being asked to do so much in the same way as a salesman in a big store asks another salesman, "Sign, please!"

The result of this sort of treatment is that if you are travelling alone you feel terribly lonely, tremendously depressed, and rather like an intruder in the hotel more than a visitor paying good money for the service which he expects to get. In my experience, which carries me over nearly half a century, I have discovered that it is a very unusual thing to be met in one of these hotels by a manager who looks as if he is glad to see you, and who makes some effort to put you at your ease and help you to feel comfortable.

Even if you have taken the precaution of writing a letter or of sending a telegram to book

your room, not one manager in fifty in these second-rate hotels seems to be aware of the fact that he should be expecting you, and not one in a hundred takes the trouble of looking up your name and greeting you with it when you arrive. Usually the manager is conspicuous by his absence, and the second question the reception clerk asks you is, "Have you booked?"

This question is asked in such a way as to suggest in your mind that if you have not you are in a hopeless position, and not likely to get a bed to sleep in that night.

Of course, by reason of the fact that I have stayed at most of the big hotels in the provinces many times, I have become fairly well known and my arrivals are not the nightmares they used to be in the old days, and I am not making this criticism of some of the British hotels on my own behalf so much as on behalf of the great mass of travelling public who seldom stop at the same hotel twice, and who, either through ignorance of which are the most comfortable hotels, or through reasons of economy, cannot afford the best. In fact, I would emphasize that the criticism is not levelled at all against the better-known hotels, or at any of those at which I have been able to stay during these many years past. If I were asked for advice on this subject, I would confidently recommend the L.M.S. hotels, where the management is so perfect that it could not be bettered the whole world over.

As I am writing about the L.M.S. hotels, I cannot cease to wonder why so many people



LEAVING FOR BUCKINGHAM PALACE TO BE KNIGHTED





go abroad for their holidays before they know anything of their own beautiful country. This must apply particularly to golfers. Take Gleneagles: there is a palace in perfection in every way, situated in one of the most beautiful parts of Scotland—I call it “The Palace in the Mountains”—with two of the finest golf courses in the British Isles, and I have played over three hundred-odd in different parts of the world. What is more wonderful is that they give champagne away up there; whether you drink it or not you have to take it, it is free to all. Think of it, you lovers of wine: as much as you want! Free! The whole place is surrounded by it, and the brand is air! *Champagne air!* Drink deep of it! It is life!

Even before I was able to stay at the best hotels I became sufficiently well known at the others to be certain of a friendly nod or a smile of recognition when I first arrived. But think how much nicer it would be if everyone who went to any hotel were greeted something in the way that a host greets his guests—as if the manager were glad to see you and not as if you were just a nuisance who had to be tolerated.

Unlike an eminent theatrical colleague of mine, I have always found the hotels in Cambridge unusually comfortable, and the managements all too ready to give of their best.

One does not expect to find a modern skyscraper in an old university town—nor does one want it.

It should satisfy most people to know that they can be as comfortable there as they can be

in their homes—and I think I ought to know, having lived in hotels for the greater part of thirty-six years.

With regard to hotel noises, I am sure it only wants a little notice taken of them by someone in the management for them to be stopped—at least the unnecessary ones. A page, or boots, shouts along the corridor, “Maid! maid!” or there is a service telephone which is answered very loudly at all times. Of course, the management cannot help the man who has to be called at six in the morning being selfish enough to think that everybody else should be awake at this hour; but they can stop the service trolleys squeaking so that in your half-waking stupor you think you are sleeping in an aviary, but wake to find the wheels of the trolley want a drip of oil!

I was unfortunate enough once to be sleeping over a courtyard where the painters started work at six-thirty a.m. I stood the shouting of these worthy men for a long time, but at last my temper got the better of me and I opened my window and shouted, “Can’t you make less noise there. Don’t you know people want to sleep?” All I got in reply was, “Lor’ love yer, mate, look at the golliwog!” When I looked in the glass the painter’s description of me was true to life: my hair was rough and I had on very wide-striped pyjamas.

On the Continent when you arrive at an hotel, though you have not been there before and are not likely ever to go there again, it is seldom

that you are not met by the maître d'hôtel or his assistant, who goes out of his way to make you feel he is glad you have arrived, and that, for the moment at any rate, you are the only person in the world that counts. The whole thing reduces itself to a matter of simple psychology.

Once again, however, although one is able to criticize the small British hotels in this way—and I think anyone who has had to stay in them very frequently will agree that the criticism is justified—the American equivalent again compares unfavourably.

In a big hotel in the United States there is such a rush and bustle and everyone is so busy that if you do not know the ropes you will be lost in the crush. There, if you approach the reception-clerk and hesitate in asking a question, you are pushed roughly aside while a dozen or more who are waiting behind you book their rooms and get quick and efficient service. In America they have no time for such words as "Please" or "Thank you", the general understanding being that there is no need to beg for anything for which you are going to pay, nor to say thank you when you have got it. The hotel is a business which you are patronizing, and it is the management who should ask favours if any favours are to be asked at all.

At the same time, the American hotels do study psychology in a rather clever way. Over there, if an hotel is empty or doing bad business, every light in the place that is visible from the street is turned on, and since the hotels are

sky-scrapers there are a good many hundreds of windows from which the lights shine. The whole place is blazoned with light.

If the hotel is full, on the other hand, most of the lights are either turned out or on half-current. The result is this: When you, a stranger, arrive in a town, you look up at a number of hotels, see one that is nicely lighted up and say to yourself: "Ah! Here's a nice cheerful-looking place! I'll go there." And in you go. But soon after you have arrived you discover that you have most of the hotel to yourself! Experience, therefore, has taught me, when in America, not to choose an hotel that is well lighted. I invariably find more people in those hotels that are not so well lighted, and when you are in an American crowd, especially the crowd that gathers in the hotels, believe me, you are seeing life.

In England, of course, the hotelkeeper works on the plan that if he is not doing good business he can't afford to spend a farthing more than is absolutely necessary, so he reverses the process. If you want life and laughter and gaiety you go to an hotel where all the lights are shining brightly. There you know they are full of guests and everything is going with a swing. But if you want to lead a quiet life and be on your own, go to an hotel which looks fairly dismal. In nine cases out of ten you will have at least one corridor to yourself!

I am sorry that I have suddenly developed into a critic like this. It is not that I want to criticize or to decry—rather do I think that the

majority of the small British hotelkeepers have not realized the "evil of their ways", and I think that perhaps, if it were pointed out to them in a kindly manner, they would be the first to rectify these little things to which I have drawn attention. In this spirit, therefore, perhaps I may be permitted to make one or two other minor points.

One has reference to the system of tipping. That I have always found a most embarrassing business in England. I never know quite what to give a man who has waited on me at table, or who has carried my luggage, or to the maid who has looked after my room, or to a dozen and one other people who do little services for me when I am living in an hotel. Neither do I know where to begin my tipping and where to leave off, and I am always assailed with the feeling that comes on me an hour or two before I am due to leave that perhaps I shall forget some good fellow who has gone out of his way to help me, or that I shall make a fool of myself either by giving too much or too little.

In theory, a system in operation on the Continent whereby ten per cent. is added to your hotel bill is a good one, but I have discovered, human nature being what it is, it does not work out in practice, for under that all-embracing heading of "Service" you pay your ten per cent. and, if you are an "innocent abroad", you are under the impression that you have done all that is necessary in a proper manner. But wait till you try to get away from the hotel.

Nine times out of ten the chambermaid so

arranges things that there is a necessity for her to pop into your room just as you are looking round to see if there is anything you have left behind. The boots bobs up in the corridor; the porter sees to it that he has discovered you and bundled you into a cab before he lets go your luggage, and a dozen other people single you out, cover you with smiles and bow to you in the most ingratiating manner. What is the result? Another ten per cent. on your hotel bill plus, as often as not, another five goes in odd tips, because, if you are a sensitive fellow, you cannot pass these people by.

I remember on one occasion no fewer than seven people, all servants of the hotel, lined up on the front steps in a very suggestive way as I left. This despite the fact that I had, of course, paid my ten per cent. "service" on my bill.

Therefore, even the Continental system does not work out as satisfactorily as it should. A good many people will tell you, I know, that if you have paid the "service" on your bill you are under no further obligation to the hotel staff, but you have to be a pretty thick-skinned fellow to get away with that.

Generally speaking, I think you will be on the right side in a restaurant if you give the waiter roughly ten per cent. of your bill—that is, if you have had a reasonable meal. But, of course, if you have spent a very small amount, as sometimes you do when you make use of a restaurant, ten per cent. would be an absurd sum, and in that case I think a shilling for each person for a light meal

is the minimum one can give. The only thing to do is to use your judgment. If the boots has done his job particularly well, tip him particularly well; he deserves it, and it will encourage him. If he has done his job very badly, tip him badly; again he will deserve it, and it will discourage him. Treat the other hotel servants, I think, broadly in the same way, and your conscience will be satisfied and so will the staff.

Speaking of boots in the hotel, I once received a very valuable tip from one of these humble fellows. It was at the Queen's Hotel in Birmingham. I had—in the usual way—put my shoes outside overnight to be cleaned, and in the morning they dazzled me with their brilliance; so much so that I sought out the man who had cleaned them.

"Tell me," I requested him, "what is the remarkable polish you have used on my shoes? They look marvellous, almost like patent leather."

"'Taint the polish, guv'nor," he told me.

I was intrigued.

"What is it, then?" I inquired.

"Spit!" he informed me.

Naturally I was very amused at receiving this hint.

"You must get thirsty by the time you've cleaned two or three dozen pairs of shoes," I remarked jocularly.

"No, I don't, sir," he replied. "I don't spit on all of 'em. It all depends."

Now that fellow I tipped fairly well, even though it meant that his information resulted in



me never allowing hotel boots to clean my footwear again, except this particular fellow in Birmingham. Having received such a valuable hint from him, I confess I tried it out, with such magnificent results that I now always clean my own shoes !

May I give a tip (a verbal one !) to restaurant waiters ? It is this : "Look after the ladies as well as you do the men."

Time and time again I have noticed, as must also hundreds of other people who dine in public restaurants, that if a man goes in and sits alone at a table the head waiter comes up to him and gives him the menu, calls up another waiter to take his order, and sees to it that the wine waiter comes along to see what he requires. Generally there is a buzzing around to ensure that the man is attended to properly and well.

But what happens when a woman enters a restaurant alone ? Frequently it is as much as she can do to get served. I don't know why it is, but I have never seen a waiter look after a lonely woman diner properly. It is very foolish of them, because in these days of sex equality a woman is fully entitled to dine alone, and, quite incidentally, the woman who is dining alone frequently gives a much larger tip than does a man.

Why do waiters dislike waiting on women if they are not accompanied by men friends ? It is a question which I have often asked myself, but I have never been able to discover the answer. Perhaps some day a waiter will let me into the secret.

So far as this question of tipping is concerned, America is very, very bad. You get absolutely nothing out there unless you pay for it. If you want an evening paper and ask a page boy to get it, he does so and then waits for his tip. If you ring a bell for a jug of iced water, it is brought, and the servant who brings it waits most openly, almost defiantly, for the tip. If a messenger delivers a letter, there is a tip. No matter what you do, or, rather, no matter what you ask to be done for you, you must be certain it will cost you a tip.

You go through an American hotel with your hand constantly in and out of your pocket. Of course, you get good and willing service so long as you conform to the "rules", but fail to tip and see what happens then.

I say "fail to tip", but I doubt whether there is a man living who would have the nerve to try it. I shouldn't. I rather laugh when I think of some of my experiences in American hotels. I don't think I am an unduly mean man, but I have never become accustomed to ringing the bell with one hand, ask for something to be done, and putting my other hand in my pocket to get a coin with which to pay for the service. But that is what you have to do in America.

American hotel servants do not receive tips, in fact, so much as levy a toll. One job one tip. That seems to be the idea. But, on the other hand, I must confess that when you want to leave the hotel they have finished with you.

I do not mean to say that as soon as they know you are leaving they refuse to give you any

more service. They go on with that just as long as you go on asking for it and as long as you go on tipping for it. But what I mean to say is that you never get a line-up of servants when you are leaving. You never get anyone looking at you in the way that an English waiter can look at you, asking for a tip without saying a word ! Life over there is far too busy for that, and when you leave, you leave, and that is all there is to it. Someone else takes your place and the toll is levied over and over and over again.

Really, the question of tipping is an exceedingly embarrassing one, and I think it is high time someone thought out a really good system that is foolproof. It would be a boon to thousands of people like myself, as well as to the casual traveller—in fact, perhaps more so to the latter, because after you have travelled round for a year or two, constantly moving from one place to another, you build up a sort of system of your own sub-consciously. But it is not a system in the sense that one could recommend it, so that I am unable to offer just that advice. All I can do is to point to the disadvantages of the arrangements or accepted customs that exist to-day, and hope that, having drawn attention to the subject, some person with sufficient leisure time and a knowledge of what is required will sit down and hammer out a scheme. If he succeeds in doing so I think he should be made a national, or even an international, hero !

Apart from these little inconveniences to which I have drawn attention, I must say that I find

hotel life extraordinarily fascinating and interesting. Living in an hotel is like being part of an ever-changing human mosaic. All sorts and conditions of people come and go, some of them nice, some of them nasty, some of them neither one thing nor the other; some of them old, some of them young, and again, I am afraid, some of them neither one thing nor the other!

Then again, there is this continual feeling that the life you are leading is a fascinating mixture of business and pleasure.

During my travels and sojourns in hotels, I have met a number of interesting people and I have formed some very deep and sincere friendships. Frequently, too, lonely people come together in an hotel quite casually, get to know one another and then go on knowing one another, in the real sense of the phrase, for years.

Looking back over the years—for it must be years—that I have spent in hotels, I have come to the conclusion that during most of the time I have been rubbing shoulders with Life, and, to me, something of a student of human nature, nothing could be more fascinating. While, like every other Englishman, I love my home and my own fireside, I do not regret one hour that I have spent in hotels—not that all of them have been happy, far from it—yet none of them, so far as I can remember, has been really miserable, and that is something to be thankful for.

One experiences an entirely different kind of “life” in apartment houses, or “digs” as they are called mostly. I must have spent a few years in

them. In my earlier days when I was touring with the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas, a stay at an hotel would have been an undreamt-of luxury ; in fact frequently I had to stay at very modest "digs".

And here I should like to doff my hat to the many landladies who have given me kindly and motherly attention when I have been on tour, particularly in the early days when I found it a great struggle to live, and when every penny I earned was worth far more than a five-pound note to me to-day.

These provincial apartment-house keepers who cater particularly for touring theatrical companies are fairy godmothers in disguise. In fact I think it is not too much to say that if these dear souls disappeared a good many touring companies who go out on the road now would not be able to do so.

In many cases of which I have knowledge these good women who take in strolling players "mother" the young men and women with a real affection, encouraging them, helping them, and looking after their bodily welfare—which, after all, is a very important item, since we are all human.

I suppose it would even be right to say that, had it not been for the existence of these good landladies, there is more than one well-known star in the theatrical firmament who would never have been famous, for, it must be remembered, the provinces is the nursery for the West End theatres. It is the experience that the young actor

or actress gets in the provinces, which is a very hard, although very good school, that enables him or her one day to take a place in the West End and gradually climb to the top of the tree; to arrive at that day when his or her name appears outside the theatre in brilliant lights; to achieve fame. There are very few of these stars who, if they wished, could not tell a tale that would make very impressive and very human reading of some good landlady in the provinces who had mothered them. Three hearty cheers for the good provincial theatrical landlady!

Some of them, dear souls, while endeavouring to take care of you, afford you a quiet laugh. Not, of course, that one would do anything to hurt these women. But nevertheless many things that they do out of the goodness of their hearts has a humorous side.

At one time in the North—many years ago—for instance, I was staying in digs and something had happened that had caused me to wish to celebrate. I forgot now just what it was, but I remember that on my way home after a *matinée* I bought a bundle of asparagus for the landlady to cook for my dinner.

I noticed that the good woman looked at the bundle in a curious way when she unwrapped it after I had handed it to her and requested her to cook it.

“Yes, sir; certainly, sir,” was all she said, but she waddled off out of the room in a state of little-concealed concern. Later dinner was served, and I discovered that the poor soul, who apparently

had never seen asparagus before and certainly had never tried to cook it before, had cut off and thrown away all those nice luscious green tips and served up the white stalks. When she placed the dish on the table she apologized, remarking, "I've boiled it for hours and hours, but I can't make it go soft."

On another occasion when I bought some asparagus and took it home my landlady cooked it perfectly and we thoroughly enjoyed it, but in the evening after the theatre, when we got home for supper, my wife, who was touring with me at the time, called my attention to a curious-looking dish which was on the table. I looked at it closely and discovered that the landlady had retrieved all the stalks which she had found at the sides of our plates, and put them on a clean dish and had garnished them with sprigs of green parsley! She obviously thought that economy was the mother of invention.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“ARE you superstitious, Harry?”

Dozens of my friends have asked me this question from time to time. I suppose it is because I am an actor and because the acting profession is proverbially superstitious. Well, I am sorry to disappoint you and to prevent you from having a sly laugh at me, but my answer to the question is no. It may be because I have spent nearly the whole of my life in the joyous atmosphere of Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

I suppose that more than half of the modern musical shows which are produced at enormous expense meet with failure, and there is nothing like lack of success or a succession of what you call “bad luck” to make you superstitious. Most actors and actresses, unfortunately, “enjoy” a precarious sort of livelihood. When a new show goes on, no one, from the man who is financially backing it down to the call-boy, can be certain whether it is going to be a success or not, and always there is a half fear in the back of every-one’s mind that it will not be.

All too frequently the fear is justified. Is it to be wondered, then, that an actor or an actress who gets a part in a show which “flops” after the first week or two naturally becomes superstitious? You cannot laugh at yourself under such

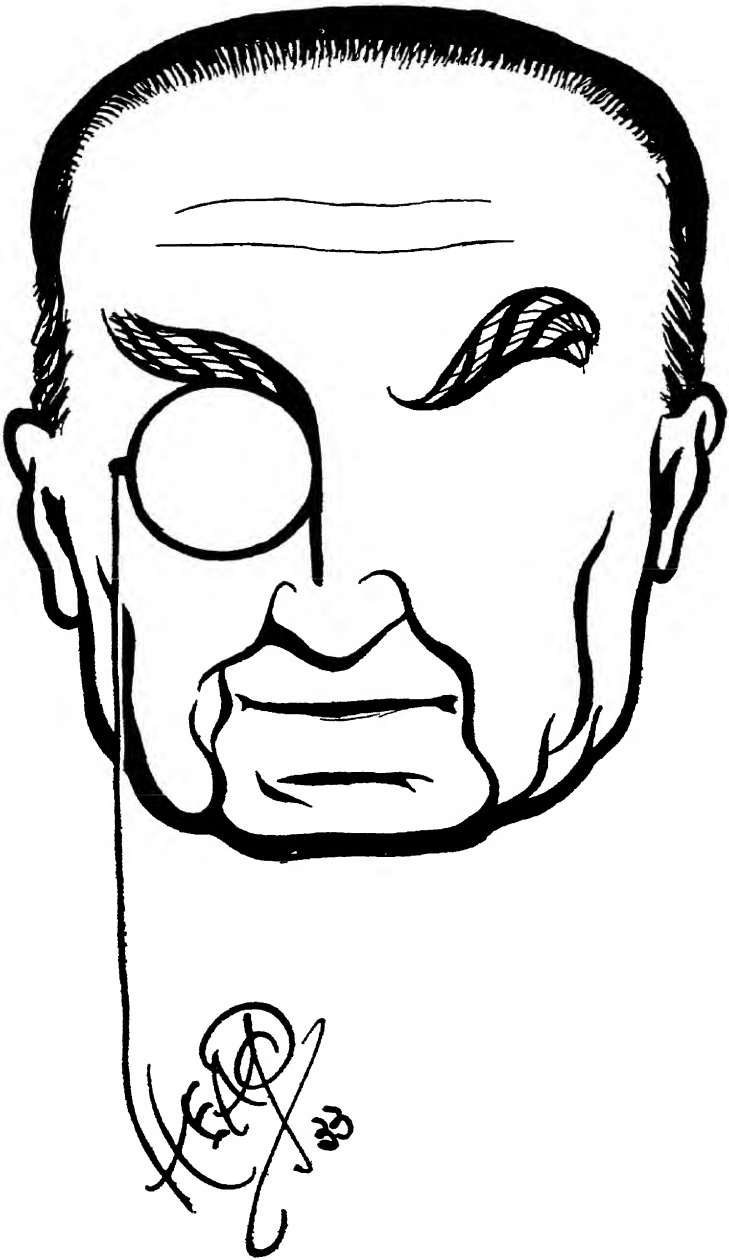


circumstances and you are inclined to have unreasonable faith in lucky charms and unreasonable fear of Friday the 13th and a dozen and one other similar things.

But it is rather different with the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. The audiences which are drawn to the theatre by them are every bit as large and enthusiastic as they were when these operas first appeared, and no one who knows and loves the operas is surprised at this. Every line of every one of them and every note of the music is enriched beyond measure by the genius of Sir William Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan.

The operas are classics, and, like the classics in literature, they will, I veritably believe, live for ever. The English stage has nothing quite like them, and the curious thing about them is—and this to my mind stamps them with genius—that they are as classical to-day in their allusions as ever they were. Consequently they appeal to young and old alike, and it is their universality of appeal that is one of their major triumphs. Take any one of the operas, examine it and examine its music, and you will find that what I have said is correct ; therein you will discover the reason for their Peter Pan existence.

We hear a lot these days about jazz and theme songs which become so popular that errand boys go round the streets whistling them, but I doubt whether even the composers of some of them can remember more than two consecutive bars of a particular melody six months after it has been published. These modern songs come with a blare



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CARICATURE OF SIR HENRY LYTTON BY HEAP



of publicity, they are quickly the rage, and equally quickly they die out and are forgotten.

I believe I am correct in saying the average life of a modern song is twelve weeks, and many of them, of course, do not last twelve days. For a very short period everyone hums and whistles and sings them, and then, almost before the ink on the music score has dried, another "stupendously popular" theme song is written, composed, put in a talkie, published—and then dies. So it goes on with this modern music, which is nothing more nor less than a kind of fantastic musical indigestion.

But what of the music of Sir Arthur Sullivan? There is not a child who is not familiar with some fragment of one of his melodies, even though he may not be aware of the source of the music which he is whistling. And, more than that, it is almost impossible to hear any programme of popular light music which does not include something that has been written by Sullivan for one of his operas. The music lives and it will go on living for this reason: it has a sweet simplicity and a pure quality of melody. I cannot describe it except to say that it is whimsical, sad, joyous, haunting—all in turn.

It is just the same with the lyrics and the topical allusions of Sir William Gilbert. Sir William took our national characteristics, even our national institutions, and pilloried them with the joy of laughter, with witticism and good-natured ridicule.

In doing so he was proving that he had grasped

an essential ingredient of the British character—an ability to laugh at oneself.

One could give countless examples of this supreme ability of Sir William. Sir Joseph Porter in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, for instance.

But there is no need to give examples. Every one who knows anything at all about the operas knows exactly what I mean, and they will realize this rather curious fact: that the plays depend neither upon the lines nor the situation. Their own joyous witticism “gets them over”, and has kept and will keep them evergreen.

I do not think there is a flaw or a weakness in any line of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and if I were asked to express an opinion as to whether Gilbert owed more to Sullivan than Sullivan owed to Gilbert I should not be able to answer. I think they were the perfect pair of—I was going to say workmen, but that is a wrong term. There is only one word to use to describe them, and that is artists.

I had no intention of setting out to praise the operas in this way, but in the fact that I have done so in spite of myself you have one of the secrets of their success. They make such an appeal that you cannot help but love and appreciate them.

The real point I wanted to make is that they are still as popular to-day as ever they were; members of the cast may come and members of the cast may go, but the operas go on for ever.

Incidentally, a man or woman who is a member

of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company is a very fortunate person. It does not fall to the lot of every actor and actress to interpret such delightful, such perfect work. Nor to play in such popular and highly appreciated productions. It is a joyous work which keeps one young and happy. When you are young and happy you have no need for superstition.

Of course, some people confuse superstition with common sense. I remember once one of my friends, who had a moment or two before been discussing this very subject with me and to whom I had just declared that I was not superstitious, thought it was a very good joke to see me step off the kerb and go round a ladder instead of underneath it.

"I thought you were not superstitious, Harry," he exclaimed with more than a spice of sarcasm in his voice.

"Nor am I," I replied; "but neither am I a fool."

"What do you mean by that?" asked my friend.

"Merely that I do not see the point of walking under a ladder and getting covered with a bucket of paint," I explained.

Other friends have laughed slyly at my watch-chain and have remarked with a twinkle: "Oh, no! You're not superstitious, Harry, I can see that!"

Such friends are referring to the small bundle of charms which I carry on my watch-chain, and although these friends will not believe it,

I attach no superstitious significance to any one of them. They are just pleasant little reminders of my friends and my travels.

I have dangling from my watch-chain, for instance, a little crescent moon of silver and enamel. Round the side of the moon there are some little clouds that are showing their silver lining, while the moon itself is composed of tiny diamonds, one of which is missing. This souvenir was given to me by Mr. George Grossmith, who played the parts in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas which I am playing now, and, when he handed it to me he remarked very kindly, "You will supply the missing star."

It is perfectly natural that I should keep such a charming souvenir as that without, I hope, being accused of superstition.

Also among my bundle of charms I have various shamrock and little gold pigs. They have been given to me by friends in Ireland and I keep them merely as pleasant little mementoes.

My lucky number is thirteen. Ah, there you think you've caught me out! I can hear you saying, as many of my friends have said, "Oh, I thought you said you weren't superstitious."

Well, I repeat again that I am not, and if you press the point I must confess that the statement that thirteen is my lucky number is pure sentiment. I always say that it is quite jokingly when I'm at home, and my daughter, having heard me say it so many times, and having herself teased me about it, gave me a thirteen set in a circle cut out of a half-sovereign. With

that token my "superstition" literally pinned itself to me. So there it is.

To my mind to be superstitious implies that you are afraid of something. Well, I'm not a brave man, but I am glad and thankful to be able to say that I have led a happy life. As I said at the commencement of this book, my story is one of the love and light of laughter, and I certainly do not believe in meeting trouble half-way by filling my head full of bogies about this thing going to happen or that thing going to happen.

Far too many people do that, I think. In my opinion it is a good maxim to take life as it comes and welcome it with both hands, and if now and then Life, getting a bit frisky, tries to get you one on the chin, just do the same as a good boxer does, feint, and just drive one back to the chin. If you adopt this attitude you'll come out all right; but if the worst comes to the worst and you don't, then you have the satisfaction of knowing that you've done your best.

In any case, if you adopt my motto, "Laugh, Punchinello!" it will help you along the road quite a bit. After all, a good laugh always helps, and if you can manage to laugh when you do not feel like it then you will find things go ever so much better.





## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE subject of superstition leads me to discuss, for a moment, my hair. That, you may think, is strange, but such a number of my friends, having questioned me and, I am afraid, gained very little satisfaction from me regarding my superstitions, finish up with this strange remark :

“Well, anyway, Harry, if you’re not superstitious, you’re vain. Your hair’s dyed.”

So far as years are concerned regarding my age I have passed the threescore mark, yet I have not a grey hair in my head. Perhaps I owe the fact to a happy temperament, but, whatever the reason, it is a fact. Yet few of my friends will believe it. One day, I remember, I had quite an argument with a man who offered to bet me half a sovereign that my hair was dyed and dared me to prove the contrary.

I immediately took up the challenge, caught him by the arm and hurried him along the street until I came to a hairdresser’s. Together we plunged inside. I explained to the hairdresser that the condition of my hair was the subject of a little bet between us, and asked him to act as referee. It was rather funny, I suppose, but he sat me down in a chair, combed my hair very diligently, parting it here and parting it there, and generally

giving it a thorough examination. Eventually he said :

“No, sir, not a trace of dye anywhere.”

Thus I took the half-sovereign—but in the evening I took my friend out to dine and it cost me thirty shillings ! One always has to pay the price of vanity, although in this instance I must plead the matter was really forced upon me. When a man is over sixty he is rather proud if he has no grey hairs, even though he might not talk about it, and it wounds one’s pride not to be believed, even if one’s friends cannot congratulate one.

However, that’s all by the way. What I really wanted to mention was the question of age. I do not suffer from vanity, but I can quite understand people being sceptical about me still playing in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas when I am nearly sixty-six years of age, playing rôles usually undertaken by men of half my years if not younger. Indeed, some of the parts I have played myself for well over forty years. One of the rôles I have been playing until lately, for example, is that of Robin Oakapple in *Ruddigore*. I understudied George Grossmith in this character when the opera was done at the Savoy in 1887, which is forty-six years ago. I was then nineteen years of age.

It will be conceded, I think, that to appear prominently in half a dozen operas a week for forty-eight weeks in the year involves considerable mental and physical demand. Add to that the exertion of travelling a few thousand miles and you

will realize that the job is one that might well tax the energies of men much younger than I am.

If, therefore, I am occasionally dubbed the Peter Pan of the D'Oyly Carte Company, it would, I must admit, be sheer affectation on my part to "register surprise", as they say on the films.

Nor am I surprised to be asked frequently the very natural question, "What is the secret of your perpetual youth?" Like most apparent mysteries, it is capable of fairly easy solution. The answer is there is not one secret, but several, each of which has its relative importance to the main question. I should set them out thus :

Plenty of fresh air—regular habits—regular exercise—moderate feeding—moderate drinking—*moderation!*

There! Nothing very unusual in that, is there? And you will notice in the list there are no don'ts. I don't believe in "don'ts", although my recipe is perhaps a little old-fashioned. I personally can prove, however, that it is effective. You will observe that regularity and moderation are the fundamentals.

Plenty of fresh air undoubtedly is an essential, and for this I go, whenever possible, to the golf course. There one is able to combine exercise with the process of cleansing the lungs and rejuvenating the nerves of the body.

Golf, I think, has made a basic change in the actor as he is to-day. In the old days golf was played by the selected few, numbered among whom were not actors and actresses! Also in the old days it was impossible for an actor to join a foot-

ball or a cricket team. The very nature of his work prevented him from doing so, because when he would have been required to support his team he more than likely would have had to be taking part in a *matinée*, while in addition, once he had commenced to play a game he would have to see it through, because both are team games. With golf, on the other hand, you can play two holes, ten, eighteen, thirty-six, or any number you like, and give up when you like after having enjoyed thoroughly that part of the round which you have been able to complete.

Before golf became popular as a pastime it was quite the thing for an actor to get up at ten or eleven in the morning, stroll down to the stuffy bar of the theatre, there to meet his friends in a polluted atmosphere and talk things over while having a glass of beer. Or, if he was a very gay sort, he would go and have a game of billiards, where once again the essential fresh air was missing.

The ultra-smart among the male members of my profession used to spend their mornings in some American bar. That, however, has all changed now. It has gone out of fashion in the same way that gas-lighting has disappeared from the footlights, the dressing-rooms and the auditorium. And a very good thing, too. I am not squeamish about a man having a drink if he wishes, but I do think it is foolish if it impairs his health.

Apart from his personal predilection in the matter, an actor has no right to impair his health,

because he is a servant of the public. The public pay to see him act, and if he is not enjoying the best possible health he cannot give of his best when he is on the stage. Under the most advantageous conditions the actor's life is a trying and hard one, even though it is a thoroughly enjoyable one, and it is absolutely essential that actors and actresses should keep fit.

Golf, therefore, is a great boon to the stage and indirectly to the public as well. It does help a man or a woman to keep in condition. It is an inexpensive game, and one that teaches you to be self-reliant. You are not one of a team, but all the time you are playing against yourself, trying to beat yourself, trying to make each shot better than the last, and—joy of joys!—if you never improve it doesn't matter!

If you go through your golfing life as a rabbit, you have enjoyed it just as much as if you had become scratch. There are few actors who do not play golf to-day, and one can pick them out almost with a casual glance.

I personally have noticed a change in the complexions of actors during the past few years. In the old days an actor was a haggard, drawn, dramatic-looking fellow. To-day if you saw him in the street you would not know him from a company director—except, of course, he would not look quite so wealthy! Whereas in the old days an actor would meander along the street in an aloof kind of way, with his head far above his upturned astrachan collar, his hat turned down over his eyes as if he half feared the light of day,

to day you find him striding along the street with a springy step, looking a perfect specimen of physical manliness. The outdoor exercise he is able to take through golf is the reason.

☛ In addition to my golf I take regular indoor exercise. Every morning on getting out of bed I devote a few minutes to some special body exercises which I find are most beneficial. It is difficult to describe them without diagrams, but I might say that they are universally practised among the African natives, so that you will understand they are founded on simple natural laws. The Zulu women particularly teach these exercises to their children from early infancy, and the effect on the abdominal muscles, among other things, is such that perfect health can be assured.

To these regular exercises I am very particular to add regularity in such everyday things as mealtimes, getting up in the morning, and going to bed at night. These things, every doctor will tell you, it is essential to do with regularity, and I personally can support the dictum of the medical profession.

Many people will tell you that if you wish to enjoy perfect health you must not eat this and you must not eat that. You mustn't drink, you mustn't smoke, and you mustn't take violent exercise; in fact their curriculum is just a long list of "don'ts" and "must nots." My rules of life contain few "don'ts". I am no ascetic at the table, but I have one invariable rule—I always get up from a meal feeling that I could eat a little more.

Ninety-nine people out of every hundred eat too much.

“Never eat to repletion,” is a golden motto.

Frequently, when lunching or dining in an hotel, the waiter has said to me :

“You’re not eating much, sir; aren’t you feeling well to-day?”

In every case I have been able to reassure him, and, incidentally, to tell him of my golden rule by assuring him that if I had eaten more I should not have been so well.

With eating goes drinking. In this respect I think moderation is the keyword. I enjoy a glass of wine, but I seldom take more than one, although I do not make that rule a wooden one.

With regard to drinking I discovered quite inadvertently an important fact which cannot be too widely known among young people. It came to my knowledge in this way. Some years ago I was being medically examined for a life assurance. When the doctor had finished a very thorough inspection and examination, he surprised me somewhat by asking :

“Do you mind me calling in another doctor to see you?”

It made me feel rather anxious.

“Why?” I asked, with alarm in my voice.

“Is there anything wrong?”

The doctor laughed.

“Quite the contrary,” he reassured me. “I merely want another doctor to confirm what I have found. It is most extraordinary.”

He sent for a brother medico and the two of

them again ran the rule over me. The second doctor seemed as surprised as the first, who explained to me thus :

“What has amazed us, Mr. Lytton, is that you, despite your age, should have the heart and lungs of a man of thirty. We have never met a similar case and cannot account for it.”

All sorts of questions were put to me by these two puzzled doctors.

Presently a light lit up in the eyes of one of them and I could tell he thought he had suddenly made a discovery which would account for my condition.

“Are you teetotal ?” he asked.

“No,” I replied, “but I used to be. Until after I was thirty years of age I had never tasted alcohol.”

“That’s the secret !” they almost shouted together. “That accounts for the youthful arteries and for the wonderful condition in which we find you.”

Needless to say, I was promptly passed as a first-class life. Few men, I think, at the age of sixty could achieve this.

Naturally I questioned the doctors about alcohol, and it seems from what they told me that if taken prior to the age of thirty it has the effect of hardening the arteries to such an extent that they can never afterwards recover their normal condition. If, however, no alcohol is taken before thirty, little harm can result from subsequent drinking. So long as it is not excessive, the arteries remain unaffected.



Those, therefore, who wish to preserve their youth should make a note of this vital point :

*Be teetotal until you are thirty. You can please yourself afterwards.*

Since all the things I have mentioned are but simple rules of life, one is tempted to ask the question, "Why grow old?"

Why, indeed? It is a well-worn saying that a man is as old as he feels, and unless one is naturally weak I can see no reason why every man who has attained sixty or seventy years of age should feel much more than half that, either physically or mentally.

Many people will tell you that modern conditions of life do not add to the youth of a man, or, for that matter, of a woman. That may be so if you take into consideration such things as abnormal trade depression and business worries that result therefrom. But, generally speaking, I think modern conditions and tendencies are certainly more advantageous than the old Victorian mode of life. The ladies have added to their own charms as well as to their own health and comfort by the very sensible changes in fashion which they have adopted, and I am quite certain that, just as they have become freer of limb, so have they become much freer of mind. Their mentalities are much more agile and they take a much wider interest in the affairs of the world, which most certainly is to their good.

Not so very many years ago, even "nice" people had very curious ideas of hygiene.

That has all been altered now, both in the

home and in the office. I wonder what the modern business girl—the city typist—would think of the old Dickensian offices in which their fathers, or perhaps their grandfathers, had to work. They were stuffy little places with windows that didn't open, were lit by naked flames of gas, and with the office shelves piled with bundles of dusty old papers that weren't touched year in or year out.

To-day the modern business office is something that is almost unrecognizable. Science has been brought to bear upon business, and business efficiency experts make it their whole-time job to work out such small details as the cubic feet of air space each worker shall have, whether in office or in factory. Light and ventilation are important factors; so, too, is heat, and in many factories even the nutriment value of the food served in the canteens and restaurants. In addition to all this, in the home you have the labour-saving devices—just as much or even more than you have in the offices.

This modern hygiene has even been taken into the theatres, thank goodness! No wonder actors of the old school were a pasty-faced, decrepit-looking lot, for they frequently had to work in a shimmering haze caused by the naked gas-jets which we used as footlights, and their dressing-rooms were stuffy little places where it was almost impossible to turn round, while few of them had any ventilation at all, and such a thing as scientific ventilation in the theatres themselves was unknown.

To-day, not only is there electric light in all the theatres, but in many of them they take the air in at one side, wash it, warm it, and pass it through and out on the other side of the theatre so that there is a constant change of pure air. I can remember the old days, and, believe me, the difference is tremendous.

Why, at the dear old Savoy Theatre in London my dressing-room was a miniature suite, for next to my dressing-room I had a nicely furnished rest-room, where in later years, when I had a *matinée* and was playing again in the evening, I was able to rest quietly during the interval between the two shows.

Even in the provincial theatres the dressing-rooms are miniature palaces compared with what they used to be not so very many years ago.

All these things, I think, have contributed very definitely to the general improvement in both the acting and the health of the members of the theatrical profession. In the old days at the end of a show you left the theatre feeling half dead with fatigue. To-day, after a show, an actor, of course, is tired—very tired if he has given of his best—but he does not suffer from that sense of terrible fatigue which makes you feel on the verge of collapse and gives you the impression that you could sleep for a week.

Why, quite recently after giving a *matinée* and evening performance at the Savoy Theatre, London, I have popped into the Savoy Grill with a party of friends and had a thoroughly enjoyable hour or so! The result of such a diversion has been



WAITERS DRESSED IN THE COSTUMES FROM THE GILBERT AND SULLIVAN OPERAS SIR HENRY LYTTON AND THE RIGHT HONBLE DAVID LLOYD GEORGE AT A LUNCHEON GIVEN TO SIR HENRY LYTTON AT THE SAVOY HOTEL



a tonic, and after it I have found I have been able to go home and sleep peacefully, without the theatre still being on my mind. That surely contributes to the success of one's acting.

Speaking of the changes in the acting profession during the last twenty-five or thirty years, one is reminded of another thing. That is the change in the social standing of members of the theatrical profession. Not so many years ago all actors and actresses were looked upon as rogues and vagabonds. I can remember the time when, should a theatrical company arrive in a town, the message went round, "Take in the washing, the squallers be come!"

Apparently, you see, we were looked upon as thieves as well as rogues and vagabonds.

But to-day the actor and actress is welcomed in even the highest social circles. The public has come to realize that they are artists who contribute their very best to the general weal; that they are not ill-educated, ill-spoken fellows with loose morals and, as was frequently believed in the olden days, with a loose mentality.

The change is the result of an appreciation on the part of the public for which I, and I believe all members of my profession, are truly appreciative. After all, the majority of us are not a bad lot, and we should feel very embarrassed if we believed that people thought we were.

A good many things have contributed to this change in the attitude towards us. One of them, I think, is this game of golf about which I am so very enthusiastic. If the truth were stated, in the

olden days actors, even more than actresses, were a sorry-looking lot, and had they been invited to parties and other social functions I am afraid they would rather have looked like ghosts at the feast. To-day an actor is a healthy, happy, jolly fellow who is able to talk about all sorts of things besides his own profession, and in many cases has a natural gift for entertaining which expresses itself off the stage almost as much as it does on.

In other words, an actor is a good fellow to have at your party; he can keep the guests in a good humour and contribute to the general conviviality. Not, I hope, that that is the reason why our social status has been raised! I hope we are asked to parties and the like for our own sakes; because we are just nice, intelligent human beings who like to mix with our own species. The stage always has been and always will be very hard work. That is one reason why we theatrical folk like to have the opportunity of enjoying a social life as well as a professional one.

Incidentally, I believe, that is one reason why, generally speaking, actors and actresses become a much healthier race than they used to be. The stage is to a very large extent a place of great competition, where it is a matter of the survival of the fittest. There is no cosy dinner for the actor until his night's work is over. Then frequently it is much too late to eat without suffering from indigestion, and nothing impairs good health more than bad digestion. Therefore an actor or an actress has to be careful about his or her health,

and the profession as a whole has not been slow to take the fullest possible advantage of all the various opportunities there are nowadays for outdoor exercise.

If you promise not to repeat it to anyone I will let you in on a secret. There are some actors and actresses I know who have taken up this modern craze for hiking! I have never taken up hiking as it is known to-day because, frankly, I don't think I should look too good in shorts! But I am very fond of a stroll in the country when I can get it.

The only thing I have against it is that in admiring the scenery one is apt to tramp on and on and then find oneself miles from a railway station and be forced to do the journey back again on foot. One does not suffer from this disadvantage with golf. There is the tramping exercise, even more than you get in ordinary walking, because you exercise the muscles of the arm, the legs and the back subconsciously, and at the same time you can have all the enjoyment of beautiful scenery as well as the fun of the game itself.

And, of course, there is always the nineteenth hole to look forward to!

May I sum up by saying that the answer to the question, "Why grow old?" is that there is no need at all. Just take ordinary care of yourself, be regular as I have amplified, and—take up golf! I am almost as keen on golfing as I am on fishing. It is certainly the second best thing in my recreational life.



## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

MAY I include in this little book of my reminiscences a brief chapter which will be, in a sense, my apologia ; or, at least, if not that, then an explanation ? I should like to address it to all Gilbert and Sullivan opera lovers. The Gilbert and Sullivan public are said to number three million. Exactly how this figure is arrived at I am unable to say, but I presume it represents those who make it a point of honour to see the operas whenever they possibly can ; those who are familiar with all the music and the songs ; and those who lose no chance of making others as enthusiastic as they are themselves.

Here, in parenthesis, as it were, I should like to mention by way of general interest to you that these are to be found literally the whole world over—from China to Peru—for the operas are as successful in Australia and America as they are in the United Kingdom. There is, or at least there was, certainly one Gilbert and Sullivan opera fan in China a few years ago, for information came to me that an Englishman “exiled” in the wilder parts of China was in his garden one day singing to himself “Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes”. At the end of it he turned round and, looking through the iron gates of his garden, was surprised and a little embarrassed to discover

that he had a large audience of Celestials! That is what I call making others as enthusiastic as you are yourself, and if the Chinamen did not understand this wonderful and lovable song they certainly appreciated its melody.

But I am digressing. It is to those three million opera lovers to whom I have already referred and to those who they enthuse that I would like to address this explanation.

Quite frequently, particularly during the later years, I have heard people say: "Old Lytton's a bit of a humbug. He is billed to appear in this or that show and then doesn't turn up. His place is taken by an understudy. I suppose he's getting a bit too big."

I am not complaining about that sort of criticism. I think it is made quite genuinely and, unless the critics know the facts, quite reasonably, but I would like to point out this: an actor, no matter whether he is Henry Lytton or the veriest juvenile member of the cast, no matter whether it is a Gilbert and Sullivan opera or any other show, has to do what he is told.

If he is a member of any theatrical company and receives a call he has to answer it. On the other hand, if he is told to stand down he has to obey just the same.

I have never voluntarily been absent from any Gilbert and Sullivan opera since I first commenced acting in them nearly fifty years ago.

For one period, during my operation, for instance, it was quite obvious that I could not appear. I have never been criticized for that,

of course. But there have, I know, been occasions when certain members of the public have thought that I was going to appear in a certain performance, and for that reason—I make the statement very humbly, but I am told it is a fact—they have taken seats, only to discover that I have not been acting after all. I have only to explain to such people that have been disappointed in this way or annoyed, and I am sure they will understand. Fit and well and happy as I am, and much as I love my work, I shall not always be able to appear on the stage. Even I cannot ignore the fact that one day I shall be too old; and what is to happen to the Gilbert and Sullivan operas then?

That sounds like a very pompous question, but I do not mean it that way. It is, however, the point of my explanation. Whether I have been good, bad, or indifferent in my various rôles, when I have definitely and finally retired someone will have to take my place. Who is that someone to be? Obviously someone has to be trained in the parts, and that someone is trained and already playing some of my parts. In my opinion he is a clever young actor, and, I believe, will prove himself to be what is popularly called a “discovery”. I have always said that Messrs. Carte & Co. are wonderful people for exploiting hitherto undiscovered talent. This has been proved many times, and it is being proved again in the case of the young man chosen to play many of the rôles in which I have appeared for so many years. To-day the company is stronger from the point of

view of talent it embraces than ever it was. I say this without fear of contradiction. But I am digressing again.

Generally speaking I have enjoyed such remarkably robust health that I am afraid my understudies at various times have had at my hands very unfortunate treatment. Looking back, I feel that I have not given them a "square deal", although, of course, actually it has been nothing to do with me. As I have explained already, if I am told to play a part I play it, and if I am told not to play it then I do not do so.

The reception of an understudy when the principal is ill, or has been told to stand down, is not always pleasant. The audience is none too pleased, having taken tickets to hear their favourite, to find some unknown actor playing the part.

To this day I can recall the gloom and the cold blast of air which seemed to blow from the audience when I made my first entrance in Mr. Grossmith's part. I hope never to live through a worse period than those first few minutes. Fortunately for me, however, all went pretty well. I suffered from no loss of memory and somehow I managed to sing.

After the first coldness of the audience had worn off everyone in the pit, the stalls, the dress circle, and even "up in the Gods" was very kind and gave me a hearty round of applause after my opening song. That burst of clapping gave me the confidence I wanted. I was almost in tears when Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir William Gilbert, and Mr. D'Oyly Carte came to my dressing-room to congratulate me. The strain was over, and, may I

say, I had succeeded. Remember, I was only nineteen.

I tell you this in the nature of a plea on behalf of any understudy who might appear in my place during any of the performances of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Be kind to him and, if he deserves it, encourage him by your applause.

Even if you help him to the best of your ability he will still be experiencing a great strain.

The main point I am trying to make in this explanation is that understudies must of necessity appear sometimes, otherwise when a principal has to retire or is taken ill the show would not be able to go on. It is not only right, but proper, for the sake of the beautiful operas themselves, that Mr. D'Oyly Carte should want to train carefully and well an actor who will be able to do justice to the principal rôles at any time he is called upon to do so. How can Mr. D'Oyly Carte or anybody else who is interested in the success of the operas be quite certain that the understudy who has been chosen is the right man for the job unless he is given an opportunity to prove it?

Believe me, the understudy himself is only too anxious to secure the opportunity. I know I was when I was a young man, and if the audience—disappointed, perhaps, in the beginning—will only think of these things and respond to the effort which is being made on their behalf, they will not only be enjoying their evening's entertainment much more, but they will be definitely contributing to the future success of these wonderful theatrical classics, which certainly should not and

could not be prevented from continuing because of a whim on the part of the public.

It is very kind, in fact very fine, of a public to be loyal to a man who has spent many, many years of his life trying to entertain them in a particular way; but no matter who that man is, no matter how good he is, somebody must follow in his footsteps and carry on the work where he leaves off, particularly in the case of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

Thus, having explained myself, I am certain that my public, to whom I can never be sufficiently grateful or appreciative for their response to all my efforts, will accept my explanation and understand it. I felt it my duty to take this opportunity to offer the explanation, not only for myself, but for my successor, and still more for the sake of the wonderful operas themselves.

Incidentally, I should like to say this to any young person—man or girl—who is contemplating a career on the stage: never let your enthusiasm flag, though it may be years before you get your chance. I am afraid that I personally, as I have said, am very unkind to my understudy. In fact it has become a catchword in the Company that the most wearing of jobs is to be one of Henry Lytton's understudies. No one appreciates more than I do that to be rehearsing constantly without ever appearing before an audience is most discouraging to a young enthusiast, but do not forget that time spent in practice is never wasted. I myself used to spend hours practising that minor, but very important detail, make-up.

Similarly, I have practised many a time before the mirror, or in front of my wife—who, incidentally, is one of my severest critics—some gesture or the intonation of a particular phrase; my carriage in a particular part, and even my facial expression. In fact I was always trying something new, and the experience thus gained has time and time again proved invaluable when preparing for such parts as King Gama in *Princess Ida*, when I have to appear as a king with a deformed leg and hand.

It is, of course, useless to go on the stage merely because you think it will be an easy way of making money. The only excuse for joining an already overcrowded profession is that of enormous enthusiasm.

We are a happy lot and we enjoy every moment of our lives. Here and there, of course, there are little patches of tragedy sprawling across our lightheartedness, but sorrow must give way to smiles or life would be intolerable.

No doubt, up and down the country as well as in the West End of London there are dozens and dozens of understudies whose lives are full of "tragedy" because they cannot get a chance. To those I say: Do not be depressed or downhearted. If you have sufficient love of your work and can keep up your enthusiasm, there is not the slightest doubt that you will succeed. One day, when you least expect it, your big opportunity will come. Be prepared to take it.

This, I know, must sound like advice which is very easy to give but very difficult to carry out.

Well, I am not advising you to do something that I have not done myself, and it is very important to be prepared. On more than one occasion in the theatre I have known understudies who have been given a chance, and then, because they have not been sufficiently keen beforehand, they have gone on, played the part and failed to make an impression, with the result that the producer or the manager has made up his mind that the young actor or actress concerned is no good. That, believe me, is a much bigger tragedy than having to wait a long time for your chance.

From my talks in Hollywood with a number of famous film stars and film producers, I learnt that this also applies to the "talkie" profession.

One day, I remember particularly, I was in a studio in which they were "shooting" a crowd scene, and I was amazed by the number of beautiful girls and fine-looking young men I saw among the crowd.

So surprised was I that I turned to the producer of the picture and said: "If you are looking for film stars you seem to be surrounded by them. What are all these young people doing here?" I asked, waving my hand in the direction of the crowd. "Surely several of those beautiful young women and good-looking men would make wonderful film stars?"

"Yes," replied the producer. "They *look* all right, but they would be no good if I gave any of them a part. They can't act and they can't talk—at least not well enough for the camera."

There, you see, is the tragedy of it. Many of



those young people, I was told, had definitely been given a chance to take a part, but they were unprepared, so that at the rehearsal they proved that they were incompetent, and back they had to go into the crowd, with the heartbreaking fact impressed upon them that they had had their opportunity and had failed to take it, chiefly because, like many young actors and actresses on the stage, they had been so keen on getting an opportunity that they had failed to prepare for it.

On the other hand, there is no joy quite so keen known to the heart of a young actor or young actress as that of being given an unexpected opportunity, of taking it, and of succeeding. It is a truly wonderful joy. I expect that any great actor or actress will describe to you with enthusiasm the moment their great chance came and how they took it. It is an experience you cannot forget ; that greatest of all happiness, satisfaction.

If you have had to wait for it, and have succeeded in keeping up your spirits—even more than that, keeping up your enthusiasm—I can tell you from my own experience that you will be a far better actor or actress for it afterwards, and, incidentally, the joy will be all the keener.

In writing all this, please do not think that I am trying to “preach” to young people. I am merely offering a piece of advice which I think is well worth giving, both for the sake of the young people who may be concerned and for the sake of the théâtre itself.

I commenced this chapter with an explanation,

which I have given, and in it I made a plea to theatrical audiences. I would repeat it in conclusion. If you see a young understudy playing an important part do your very best to support him. If he does well, let him know in the only way that it is possible for an actor to know—by your applause.

A good deal has been written on the subject of applause in the popular Press. All sorts of suggestions have been made, among them one which, to my mind, is very foolish. It is that all applause should be reserved to the end. My answer to that is that after a show in which he has worked hard an actor, as soon as the final curtain is down, is on his way to the dressing-room to take off his make-up and get home, fully prepared for a good and well-deserved night's rest. What is the good of giving him your applause then? I do not say you should interrupt the song in order to clap, but when a song is finished, or a good situation is finished, if you have been pleased and favourably impressed, then is the time to show your appreciation. And I know, speaking from personal experience, that often a handclap at the psychological moment is the turning-point in a young man's career—or, for that matter, in a young woman's.

It is a terrible feeling to be on the stage doing your best and not to be certain whether you are pleasing your audience. For that reason I always feel sorry for an artist who is broadcasting, particularly the radio comedians. They can neither see their audiences nor hear the laughter, and

I should imagine they always fear the worst: that is, that their voices are going into millions of homes and being met with cold silence and lack of appreciation.

In the case of broadcasting that, I suppose, cannot be avoided, but in the case of the theatre it most certainly can. It is not vanity that makes an actor desire applause—it is because he badly needs a cue as to whether he is doing well or not, and applause is the only way you can give him that cue. Therefore, as the Americans say in their very expressive way, "Give him a glad hand."

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

As a lover of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas I am naturally interested in amateur dramatic societies, because so many of them produce and perform the works of those two great masters of light opera. It is no exaggeration to say that there are thousands of these societies up and down the country. Several of them have done me the honour of making me their president, and this gives me a still greater interest in them and in their work. May I, therefore, offer them a little advice, which, incidentally, might also help young professional actors and actresses as well ?

I have never had a great deal of spare time, but I have spent some of it at least watching the work of these amateur enthusiasts. Generally speaking, it has been quite good, and I think it would be true to say that ninety-nine per cent of the mistakes which these amateurs make is caused through inexperience and lack of thought.

Almost all young actors and actresses lose a great deal in the general excellence of their work by not following in expression and action the interest of the play. When an actor has a line to say, for instance, he should not after it is said relapse into a state of disinterestedness in which he is obviously merely standing on the stage waiting for his next cue. He should take care to

keep himself in the scene. This is not an easy thing to do. It means keeping a careful watch over the expression of one's hands as well as of one's face.

There is one play written in which two people are on the stage together, and yet the play consists of a monologue. By far the more difficult part is that of the woman who has not to speak at all. That the whole thing shall not be reduced to a farce it needs a very competent actress to play the part in which she has to speak no word at all. It is what we professionals call a "thinking" part, and he or she who can play this rôle successfully is an artist indeed.

If you want any practice as to how to keep yourself in the scene try and run through this rôle. By doing so you will learn a great deal. The play is Strindberg's *The Stronger*.

Another most difficult thing is to know just when to speak, for the length of the pauses in a dialogue is a vital thing to any scene. There is only one psychological moment in which to speak. Some say a knowledge of this comes with experience. That, of course, is true, but there are a few obvious rules of thumb by which you can go.

If you know a line will get a laugh, you have obviously to give the audience time to see the joke before you reply to it. I say "obviously", but it is surprising how many actors forget this and unintentionally "jump" a laugh. Everyone who has ever been in a theatre has known many professionals to commit this mistake—as a rule, I hope, unintentionally. But whether it is



LEAVING THE NURSING HOME AFTER MY OPERATION



unintentional or not such a thing is apt to cause bad blood in the company.

I have often seen amateurs play a scene "upon their own", as I call it. They never seem to think of bringing in their companions on the stage. Nothing is more annoying to the audience than to have words spoken at them instead of to the other players on the stage.

In the ordinary play the audience is not supposed to be present, but simply has the good fortune to be there when one of the walls of the room has fallen down while exciting incidents are going on inside. That is the illusion which, in a play, everyone should strive to attain. A musical piece, of course, is not on quite the same basis. Generally speaking, however, you should always address the fellow actor or actress and not the audience.

It has often been said—with veritable truth—that the most difficult thing to do on the stage is to stand still and do nothing. In this connection, if you have ever tried to act, you will have realized that the most difficult members of the body to control are the hands, and it is essential for anyone who takes up stage work to forget that he or she has hands—at least all the time you have nothing to do with them while are acting. For the moment you remember them you try to do something with them, and you can be certain that the action will be an unnatural one.

Make-up is another very important item. You cannot practise this too much. I practised the art frequently, even after I had been on the



stage for many years. When I had a little time to spare I would sit in front of a mirror with my grease-paint, eye-black and other make-up material and deliberately disguise myself.

You will find that it takes you a long time to become perfect, and it is safe to say that you will never get your make-up right at the first, third, or even fifth or sixth time. It is an art which requires constant effort and very meticulous attention.

Most amateurs commit the mistake of putting on too much make-up. Quite half the problem is to know exactly how much to put on and the other half is where to put it and how to put it. Don't, for instance, forget the back of your neck. It shows when you turn round with your back to the audience. And don't forget your hands. Nothing looks more ludicrous than to see a person made up as an old man if he has forgotten his hands, which look young and give the whole show away. Your hands are part of you and part of the character you are playing.

Dress is another very important point. There is nothing so disquieting as to be a little uncertain about your wig when the whole of your efforts are being directed to trying to forget yourself and to live the part which you happen to be playing. Try on your dress or dresses several times before the first performance and get used to wearing them. In this connection I always think it is a great mistake for amateurs to have only one dress rehearsal. If I were producing an amateur show, I should make the whole company

wear their dresses on many occasions, and I should insist on them making up for the parts as well.

Generally speaking, I think, the rules of behaviour on the stage can only be dictated by imagination and careful thought about the part, but here are a few obvious points.

When standing in the chorus don't lose interest in the scene that is going on around you. I have rarely seen, even in London or New York, shows in which the attention of somebody on the stage was not wandering. This point is not sufficiently realized by both professionals and amateurs. Nothing looks worse than to see members of the chorus picking out their friends and relations in front. It is bad enough when the principals do this, but heaven help the producer and the audience when the chorus follow suit. When you are watching a show sometimes you can almost hear the people on the stage say, "There's mother in the third row, and I can see auntie sitting just behind her!"

Don't move about on one leg and then on the other. Learn to stand still. This is one of the most difficult things an actor has to acquire.

Don't do anything that is foreign to the scene. By that I mean if you are a jester and you drop your handkerchief, you can kick it up with your foot and catch it. If, however, you are a Lord Chancellor, you must wait for someone else to pick it up for you.

Don't wear noisy boots. If the pair you have to wear on the stage squeak, put the soles in water for a little while. That, you will find, will stop it.

Don't walk on the garden path when it is painted to represent a river. That, to you, perhaps, may sound an unnecessary "don't", but I have seen this done at least once by a very well-known actor who ought to have known better.

Don't argue with the stage manager. His work is always difficult. You are only delaying him and wasting valuable time. It is the producer's job to produce and yours to do what you are told.

Don't emphasize too many words in one sentence, as it makes that sentence devoid of sense.

Don't drop your voice at the end of a sentence, and do make a reason for crossing the stage. Nothing looks worse than to move over to the other side without reason when your lines could have been said just as effectively without moving. To move across from one side of the stage to the other unnecessarily is equal to shouting rhetorically when you are making some comment about the weather.

Don't, as I have already mentioned, forget your hands. In this connection "wet-white" should be used freely.

When being addressed turn downstage whenever possible, with your back or shoulder to the audience. The actor speaking has a far better chance of getting his lines over when your face is turned away, and he should do the same for you when it is your turn to speak.

If an actor forgets his part, unless he is extremely skilful and is playing with reliable actors and actresses, I should not advise him to try to gag in order to fill up the space. An amateur

playing the part of a clergyman in a play I once witnessed forgot his opening lines, and this was his gag :

“And the rain fell upon the dust and I said unto you, ‘Your name is mud.’”

Well, of course, the audience laughed all right, but the young woman to whom the clergyman was speaking was so taken by surprise that she too forgot her lines, and there was a terribly embarrassing mix-up right at the very opening of the play.

When you kiss a girl on the stage, do kiss her properly; also, when you have to pat her in a fatherly manner, do that properly. Pat her on the back or the shoulder ; don't wallop her so that the poor thing nearly falls out of her chair, or is knocked off her feet.

Speak clearly. Clear articulation is unquestionably difficult to attain, and in striving to attain it many amateurs over-emphasize the importance of speaking slowly. A far more frequent fault than speaking too quickly is a curious singsong which many people adopt the moment they arrive on the stage. Many more people think that the only way to emphasize a speech is by shouting. A professional, on the other hand, you will notice, realizes that dropping the voice provides far more marked emphasis by way of over-emphasis than anything. Another danger is perhaps illustrated by a little scene which I recently witnessed.

A well-known actress, very stately in appearance, and very beautifully dressed, came into a butcher's shop to buy a very small amount of meat.

The boy who served her was told in majestic tones, "Cut it thin, my dear man! Whatever happens it must be thin." The lad cut the meat quite nicely and handed over the packet. The actress paid him one and sixpence and exclaimed, "Delicious! Delicious! This is perfectly beautiful meat! I shall always come here. It is a beautiful chop. Good-bye." This really happened, and the humour of it, of course, was entirely in the majestic rolling tones applied to the beef and one and sixpence. It was, in fact, ludicrous.

Pay a lot of attention to your shoes and stockings. The audience sees quite a deal of them while you are on the stage.

When you are telephoning on the stage don't forget to leave time for the person at the other end of the wire to reply. Incidentally, when dialling for a number in London and the provinces remember there are three letters and four figures. Almost everyone will count up to see if you get them right.

You may be inclined to smile at some of these "do's" and "dont's'," but they are examples of little points which are often forgotten in the nervousness of the moment, and which, if not given careful attention, are quite likely to spoil a perfectly good production.

If you have to gesticulate occasionally, don't pretend that your arms are pump handles and that you can't move them very well. Whatever you do when you have to make a gesture, swing your arms well clear of your head. Nothing looks worse than a man who has to call, "Hail, Cæsar!" or

some similar exclamation, and then only puts his hands half-way above his head instead of stretching them out majestically to their full extent.

If you have to cry, don't put your face in your handkerchief and wriggle your shoulders. Nobody really cries like that, and, above all, don't give heartrending sobs all the time just because you have lost a brooch.

If you have to hit anybody hit him fairly hard. You have to be hit very hard indeed before it hurts very much, and it won't do your fellow-actor much harm if his face does sting for a moment or two. It will add reality to the play.

One of the most difficult things to do is to laugh properly. In this connection always remember that it is better not to laugh enough than to laugh too much. It annoys the audience to see everybody on the stage laughing at a joke which they do not think funny. Above all, don't gush, and don't overdo any motions which can very easily become annoying.

Make your lines and do not rush them.

Be careful not to emphasize wrong words. This makes a character artificial. It makes you look a foolish nincompoop and it makes the audience annoyed. To emphasize an "it" or an "and" is absolutely unforgivable, except, of course, in very exceptional circumstances.

Don't forget that your audience is an intelligent body of people. So many young actors and actresses give the impression that they are thinking themselves quite superior people when they are acting on the stage, and by doing so

imply a disdain for their audience. This will kill your acting quicker than anything else.

Others who are inclined to suggest that their audience is not very intelligent are those who try to press a joke by over-emphasizing it. If you have a funny line and you say it properly you can be quite certain that your audience will appreciate it and laugh at it. In any case, you must give your audience credit for humorous perception, this particularly in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Gilbert's work is such that the actor must not force his lines through fear, as it were, that the people in front will otherwise not be intelligent enough "to see the joke". In fact quite a good way of putting over Gilbert's line is to pretend to be oblivious to the absurdity of what you are saying. If you do this you will find that you are giving a much quaint and more delightful effect on the other side of the footlights.

Whether it is due to the fact that most amateurs prepare for and perform their plays in their spare time I do not know, but it is so frequently obvious that an amateur has not given sufficient attention to his part before coming on the stage. It is not sufficient merely to study your part. Concentrate all your thoughts upon it, so that you thoroughly understand it, and then, when you get on the stage, or, better still, just before you make your first entrance, get right into the "skin" of the character you are playing. This will not only ensure you giving a good and intelligent performance, but you will find it will help you not to be self-conscious—a very easy thing if you are

not used to standing on the stage in front of an audience.

When you are speaking or singing, do not forget that the quite important part of your audience is in the gallery and at the back. Those good fellows up in the "gods" have paid you the compliment of coming to see you act and of coming to hear you. But, in remembering this, do not shout. If your enunciation is distinct all that you say is heard quite clearly in the farthest parts of the auditorium. When singing, special care should be taken to phrase properly.

Whenever possible, stand well to the front of the stage when you are speaking or singing, as this will have the additional effect of allowing you to make the best use of your voice and of helping you to rivet the attention of your audience.

Do not indulge in mannerisms. This applies particularly to the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, the atmosphere of which is one of repose. If you have little mannerisms of which you are conscious, drop them before you come on the stage. If you do not it is likely that you will distract the audience's attention from the central point of the scene.

Very important indeed is it that you should never forget the company. So far from being divided into principals and chorus, it is really one big family. The success of any show depends on one and all pulling together ; still less should any of the principals forget what they owe to the chorus for loyally supporting them. In this connection I should like to mention that even in



amateur companies a little kindly appreciation, a word of encouragement to those who are doing their best and who are anxious to learn, goes a long way. But, for heaven's sake, express this appreciation in a tactful manner, particularly if you happen to belong to an amateur company.

There are doubtless many other points which could be inserted in a list of "do's" and "don'ts", but I think I have mentioned the most important ones. Most of them in themselves appear possibly to be trivial things, but it is by paying attention to the small things that you will achieve the general success which, after all, is the thing that matters. By almost any one of the small mistakes which I have mentioned it is possible to kill an otherwise perfectly good performance.

I have often thought that it would be a great pleasure to produce a Gilbert and Sullivan opera for a company of amateur theatricals. I have frequently been asked to do so, but at the moment, with so much acting and travelling to be done, I find that this is a pleasure I have had to forgo. But one day I shall certainly produce one of the operas. That, however, must be when I have carried my bat "not out" and have found leisure time in which to enjoy myself.

If I did produce one of the operas I don't think I should do it in the orthodox way. First and foremost, I should insist that before any words were memorized by my company the part each member was going to play should be studied thoroughly, so that each actor and actress would know exactly what the author intended,

just what sort of a figure he or she had to depict.

Personally, I have always made it my aim on my very first entrance into any part to let the audience see just what the character is: whether a comedian, a tragedian, a lover, a fool, or a "sap". If you have studied your type of character properly, you will do this automatically when you first appear on the stage, and you will discover the battle you are about to fight with the audience is already half won. Your ability to give your audience this essential knowledge immediately they see you for the first time is none other than that something which is variously called magnetism, personality, or atmosphere.

Of course, it is no good feeling your part when you first begin to play it and then dropping that essential feeling afterwards. It is no good getting into the "skin" of a part, if in the middle of it you are going to drop out of it again. That would be more ludicrous than having never got into it.

To emphasize my point, I might take the case of Jack Point—that is not intended as a pun, although, perhaps, it is not too bad! From the moment Jack Point enters, the audience should know the manner of man that he is, and he must win their sympathy immediately. They must know him at once for none other than a poor strolling player who has been dragged from pillar to post and who, although footsore and weary, is anxious to please the crowd who have roughly chased him and Elsie Maynard in. If he fails to please the crowd, he knows that they will

duck him in the nearest pond, and it is essential that he must immediately pass this information on to his audience, not by what he says but by his manner of acting.

He must also make it perfectly clear that he and Elsie are no ordinary players. In Elizabethan times the street dancer was a familiar character, but the merry man and his maid who could sing and dance were very unusual. All this and more must be made clear on their first entry. It should be the same in the interpretation of all the other parts.

The Duke of Plaza-Toro must immediately impress his audience that although he is penniless he has retained his birth and breeding. Ko-Ko, on the other hand, is none other than a cute fellow who has been suddenly exalted to the high rank of Lord High Executioner. And he must make it quite clear that he is not accustomed to the polish and dignity of a Court.

So one could go through a list of all the characters in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, explaining the same point; so also could one go through the list of characters in any play, laying emphasis on the same vital facts in connection with them which I have advanced. I think, however, that I have said sufficient to make it clear to my readers exactly what I mean, and I feel certain that if they carry out the advice I give them with regard to this study of parts their acting will be improved one hundred per cent.

So far as the appearance of the various characters in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are

concerned, a careful study is also needed, and this can be made fairly easily.

I discovered, for instance, that by visiting the Law Courts I was able to gather a number of very valuable hints regarding the dress and essential characteristics of the make-up of the Lord Chancellor. My appearance as the Duke of Plaza-Toro I studied from an old print of a grandee. Ko-Ko's appearance is rather different, and I spent many hours preparing for this part when I first had to play it. I did a good deal of sketching on paper before I began to attempt to make up my face, studying particularly the treatment of the lines round the eyes.

The character of Bunthorne, it is understood, was from Whistler, and, knowing this, I copied the poet's photograph, even to the white spot in the ample jet-black hair. I was rewarded for my care, for when Mrs. D'Oyly Carte first saw me as Bunthorne she exclaimed: "How you do remind me of Whistler!" That indeed was a compliment.

There are many actors who think that they are so great that there is no need for them to sink their personality into the parts they are playing. This fault—for I certainly think it is a fault—is particularly noticeable with some of the big film stars.

I think I should go as far as to say that it is more than a fault; it is impudence. A good actor or a good actress plays a part; he or she does not use the rôle merely to emphasize self-importance. The late Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree and the late Wilson Barrett were great theatrical figures who

were not compelled to sink their identity into the parts they were playing, yet they were such great artists that they always did so completely.

Remember this point. It is a very important one.

All that I have been writing in this chapter might suggest to the reader that I am hypercritical of amateur theatricals. This is not so. As I have said already, I have watched a good many amateurs at work and, generally speaking, I have been greatly impressed. In fact I will go further than that. From what I have seen, I think it is quite possible, if one could fit in the time, to discover among the casts of amateur productions, particularly of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, quite a lot of unexploited talent which could be taken and trained to develop into really first-class actors and actresses.

After all, the old stock company has now practically disappeared. In the old days it was the custom to discover stars to be among these companies, and now they have ceased to exist. I think their place has been taken very efficiently by amateur dramatic societies and the like, and I think some of our West End producers would do well to pay more attention to them than they do.

If any producer or manager wishes to discover new blood for the profession he could do no better than to make a tour of the provinces watching amateur productions. Among these there are many young men and women who quite obviously were born for the stage. They remain only to be

discovered and to be trained, and I am quite certain that, with experience, they would go to the top of the tree.

I am not saying this merely as a compliment ; I believe it to be a fact, for it must be remembered one essential is always present in these amateur productions. It is that of enthusiasm and keenness. What else could make young professional men and women, who have their livelihoods to earn in the daytime, spend nearly all their spare time and quite a deal of their pocket-money in studying, producing and playing, in many cases, almost the whole range of the light operas as well as many very difficult heavy dramas, musical comedies, and even farces ?

In a sense these young people are the backbone of the theatrical profession. Without them, and without their enthusiasm, the theatre would certainly not be what it is to-day.

It is frequently said in the popular Press that the talkies have killed the music-hall and the theatre. Before anyone accepts that statement I think they would do well to think of all the very fine amateur companies of players up and down the country who stick at their job year in and year out, chiefly out of a pure love of the art of the theatre. So long as these companies exist, the theatre cannot die, even if it were possible—which I personally do not think it is—for the drama that is produced in celluloid and projected on to a screen in shadow to take the place of real flesh and blood drama, comedy or farce.

What the theatre in this country needs more than anything else to-day in order to instil new life and new enthusiasm into it is new blood, and this new blood could be found no more easily than in turning to some of these amateur dramatic societies. A little blood transfusion would do our theatres good, much good, and there are thousands of "patients" ready to undergo the operation. If I were a producer or a manager I should most certainly follow the advice which I am giving here.

Incidentally, if the professional stage took a keener and kindlier interest in the amateur stage, the benefits, I feel certain, would be mutual. It is because I feel so appreciative of the very excellent work which these amateur dramatic societies are carrying on year in and year out that I have attempted in this small way to offer them advice. I am a busy man, but whenever it is possible for me to find the time to do so I shall always be willing to help both individuals and societies.

At the moment I do not see that it is possible for me to do any more than to give hints such as those I have set out in this chapter, although on many occasions I have invited young players into my dressing-room to watch me make up and generally to prepare for my part. This I have done both in London and in the provinces, and I should like to say that I am very glad that I have been able to render these small services.

Long live the amateur dramatic societies of Great Britain! More and more success to them!

## CHAPTER TWENTY

BEING in reminiscent mood, I naturally remember, not without remorse, a number of things that have gone wrong on the stage during my half a century's experience of it. I must confess that some of these mishaps have been due to mischief on my part; mischief which I admit has been rather foolish and might have led to serious consequences so far as the productions in which I was appearing were concerned. On the other hand, some of these mishaps have been quite unexpected and accidental, taking everyone by surprise and leaving us to use our wits as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to get out of them. Fortunately, however, I am able to record that nothing really very serious has ever befallen one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

I have already recorded, I think, the occasion when I modelled a finger which I carried during a duel and which I allowed to drop on the stage in the middle of a struggle for a sword. That was during one of the performances of *The Mikado* when I had to struggle with Nanki-Poo, who has to draw his sword. That prank so upset Nanki-Poo temporarily that the results might have been very serious. Fortunately for me the audience helped me out of the dilemma into which I had put myself by seeing the joke, laughing heartily



and reassuring poor Nanki-Poo so that he was able to proceed with his part. Had the audience not laughed I verily believe that Nanki-Poo would have collapsed with sheer fright and horror at what he thought he had done.

It was also poor Nanki-Poo who was the victim of another of my practical jokes. Those of you who have seen *The Mikado* will remember that Nanki-Poo makes an entrance carrying his worldly goods and chattels in two bags, one at each end of a bamboo pole. Of course these bags are packed out with very light materials, just sufficient to prevent them from swinging about in the air too lightly. It is only the way Nanki-Poo carries them that makes them appear heavy. One night I noticed that the "prop" was always left in the wings in readiness for the entrance. This gave me an idea.

When no one was about I took out the contents of these bags and filled them with the weights which are used to hold down pieces of scenery. It so happened that that night Nanki-Poo was late making his entrance. He appeared in a great hurry, grabbed the bamboo pole and staggered on the stage very realistically indeed.

I am sure the audience appreciated the expression on his face as he stumbled with the burden, and the force with which he dropped the packages on the floor was greeted with a round of applause. Incidentally, the Nanki-Poo on that occasion was my old friend Mr. Derek Oldham.

Another *Mikado* story concerns a man who was playing Pooh-Bah, who happened to be a gentleman

who was noted for his girth. I was playing the part of Ko-Ko. I am not a big man, so that Pooh-Bah and I provided a magnificent contrast to each other. There happens to be one moment while we are on the stage together when Pooh-Bah has to roll over poor Ko-Ko. This he had done on many occasions, much to my temporary discomfort, so I thought I would get my own back with him. I did so by blowing up a bladder as tightly as I could and secreting it under my coat. Thus, when poor Pooh-Bah rolled over me it must have caused many people to wonder whether it was the end of Henry Lytton!

Misfortunes on the stage often give the audience the biggest "laughs" of the whole show, although they embarrass the cast considerably when they occur unexpectedly.

One of the most laughable unrehearsed situations occurred when we were playing in New York. The particular opera was *The Gondoliers*. We had arrived only that morning, and some of our baggage had been mislaid in transit. Unfortunately, mixed with the baggage were some of the props, among the latter being the gondola in which the Duke and his suite arrive outside the Grand Inquisitor's palace.

Although every effort was made the missing gondola could not be discovered anywhere, so the management of the theatre at which we were appearing rigged me up for the opening night a gondola which looked very nice, even though it was made of soap-boxes.

Using this temporary contraption, we arrived

on the stage. The entry was a ceremonially impressive one. Unfortunately, just as the Duke arrived, the gondola collapsed! What could we do? Thinking quickly, as one always has to think on these occasions, I made up my mind that there was nothing for it but to swim, for, remember, the gondola could not have appeared on the stage had we not been on imaginary water! Therefore when it collapsed we were obviously in the water.

I swam very hard despite the fact that I was wearing a heavy breast-plate—and, incidentally, despite the fact that actually I cannot swim at all. By dint of hard swimming and much heroic work I managed to rescue my Duchess, my daughter and myself. I thought I had got the whole party over the difficulty very well indeed, and was anticipating a round of applause from the audience to signify that they had appreciated the joke, and were prepared to overlook it, when a caustic voice from the gallery addressed me.

“You ain’t very wet, mister!” exclaimed the voice.

It was perfect!

As Gilbert and Sullivan opera lovers will know, in *The Sorcerer* I have to do a little “sorcerizing”. This I usually manage to do very persistently, but one evening, when I thought everything was going very well, I suddenly had the misfortune to burn my hand quite severely through one of the pieces of “magic” sticking to it. Unfortunately the pain was too severe for me to think of anything else, and I so far forgot myself as to shake my hand vigorously and hop about the stage with pain.



I HOPE I SHALL CARRY MY BAT



In my early days on the stage as a young man I once had the misfortune to slip while acting and to sprain my ankle rather severely. My friends sent "in front" for a doctor who happened to be in the audience. He examined the sprain carefully in my dressing-room and then, shaking his head with an air of profound sadness, informed me that I should never dance again. I looked at him aghast as I saw my livelihood disappearing. The doctor, however, turned and remarked to my wife quite nonchalantly, "Really I think it would be better to have him shot immediately."

The doctor, I discovered afterwards, was a veterinary surgeon who had been the only person of any medical training in the audience.

Some of the things at which I smile when I think of my life in the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, although closely connected with them, have not happened on the stage. I shall never forget the joy, for instance, with which I read a letter that I once found waiting for me in the dressing-room when I arrived at the theatre. It came from a Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast, who in the letter praised me highly for my performance and then added :

*You are young yet, but very soon you will be almost as good as your father was in these parts. You have not, as yet, acquired his technique, and you neglect a few of his most agreeable antics, but I can only say that I very much admire a young man who is capable of giving such a meritorious performance.*

Needless to say "my father" and I are one and the same person.

Incidentally, I believe from the correspondence I have received and from my own impressions, *The Yeomen of the Guard* is the most popular opera with the public. Not that it is easy to judge the contrasting popularity of the different operas. So much depends upon the nights upon which the performances are held. Monday nights, for instance, are slack, and audiences then are seldom enthusiastic.

That the success of a performance depends largely upon the audience is a fact which few people realize. If only we are able to make an audience enthusiastic, the show will be twice as meritorious. One of the most delightful things I know is to see before me in the stalls rows of people who would seem to be almost bored; then, as the performance proceeds, I love to watch their faces grow brighter until at last one sees them genuinely enjoying themselves and feels that one has contributed in some degree towards their happiness.

In this connection, perhaps I shall be forgiven for telling a story against my old friend, Mr. Foster. Mr. Foster's name is famous among sportsmen in the north of England. One day, near Preston, we had had the greatest day otter-hunting that it is possible to imagine, having started as early as six-thirty in the morning. At the end of the day Mr. Foster said to me: "Well, I suppose we will have a nice hot bath, a good dinner, a cigar and a nice quiet sleep, now."

"Nothing of the sort," I said. "I am off to play Ko-Ko in *The Mikado*."

"Good lord! Then I am coming with you," replied my host.

I noticed him later in a comfortable seat in a box, while I, feeling rather stiff, was working on the stage. Mr. Foster was sleeping peacefully.

This little story, which is one at which I am sure Mr. Foster would be the first to smile in appreciation, reminds me of another one in connection with my friend. It concerned a new huntsman whom Mr. Foster had engaged. This new man turned out in a most beautifully spotless kit. Mr. Foster, on the other hand, who was accustomed to going straight through hedges and ditches, rivers and all, always wore honourably stained clothes.

On this first day out with his new hunt-servant, Mr. Foster noticed the man carefully making his way to the thinnest part of the hedge and the narrowest parts of the brooks, so as not to dirty his apparel. This would never do for the master. He waited until he found his huntsman near the bank of a river, a vigorous shove, and the man was in head-first.

Mr. Foster is reputed to have been the hardest goer to otter-hounds of all times, and in fairness to this huntsman I must say that later he became a man after Mr. Foster's own heart.

Included in this list of "jokes" which I have experienced on and off the stage I must include one which occurred in a public garage when I was driving in my car from one town to another in



the north of England during a provincial tour. On the previous day the car had not been running too well, so before I set out I visited the garage where it was housed, borrowed some overalls and commenced doing one or two minor adjustments.

I was proceeding with the job very well, when the chauffeur of a large and beautiful-looking Daimler came over and gave me a few friendly words of advice. We went on chatting and became confidential.

"What's your guv'nor like, mate?" he asked.

"No so bad," I said. "What about yours?"

"Wonderful!" he answered. "He is as easy as can be to manage and knows nothing about the car."

"Why, how do you mean—manage?" I asked him.

"Haven't you been a chauffeur long?"

"Not very," I confessed. "But what did you mean by 'manage'?"

"Oh, it's this way," my newly found friend informed me. "I'll tell you a few tricks which will help you along. Whenever you see a fine-looking pub just you run short of petrol within a hundred yards of it. Be careful of doing this though—they might look in the tank. You'd better switch the engine off and say there's something wrong with it. Helps you along wonderfully on a hot day when you think you've driven far enough. If you do not want to start at all, of course, just upset the magneto a bit—put a spot of paper between the make-and-break."

He continued to give me hints and tips for

about half an hour or so, during which I learnt more about chauffeurs and their masters than I am ever likely to hear again.

Not so very long ago I was in an hotel garage which I am accustomed to frequent, when I saw a chauffeur drive up with the third opulent car I had seen in his possession.

“What cheer, mate! Been to Woolworth’s to get another one?” one of his friends called out.

It was in the Savoy Hotel that I was once mistaken, not for a chauffeur, but for a waiter. I happened to brush past the table of an irate gentleman who called, “Waiter! Waiter! Where’s my order?”

I quickly threw a serviette over my arm and answered him most politely in broken English. After dressing me down very thoroughly, he ended up by giving me his order all over again. I solemnly took it and then walked over to my table, which was unpleasantly near to his.

I suppose that one experience I had must have happened to many people. I was motoring in the wilds of Scotland, when I saw an old lady plodding along the road, and, guessing that she had a long way to walk, stopped and asked her if I could give her a lift. She replied that she was going to a town some three miles away and very gratefully accepted my offer of a ride. When we arrived there she very sweetly handed me a tip of sixpence. Needless to say, I accepted it, and it is still in my possession.

One joke at which I can laugh now, but which I did not appreciate at the time, occurred in my

dressings-room a few years ago. It was on the occasion of a first night when, truth to tell, I was feeling rather nervous and was about to go on before my "death" as Jack Point. I had spent much time and care making up for this entry and had just congratulated myself I looked like "Death", when an old friend of mine burst into the dressings-room :

"Why, Harry," he cried, "you are looking well ! Simply splendid !"

To my credit I should like to record that I made no reply. I just looked at him and then took one more reassuring look at myself in my make-up mirror before I dashed on to the stage.

Some of the best fun I ever had at a theatre was not connected with the operas at all, and now I recall it I think perhaps I should have included it in the chapter in which I told you something of my hobbies and pastimes. However, it does concern a certain dressings-room I had. The place happened to be overrun by rats—it was a good many years ago, when dressings-rooms were not what they are now. Strange as it may seem, I rather enjoyed that dressings-room and used to call it my "shooting preserve". My practice was to put bread inside four or five paper bags and leave them on the floor. Then I would flick out the lights, climb on the table with a small revolver and wait. In a moment or two the rats would come out and I would switch on the lights and shoot away.

One could tell many delightful stories about the late Sir Arthur Sullivan. One of the most

charming concerns a young singer who was booked for an audition. The youngster was a little early, and on his arrival he found a man idly strumming at the piano.

The man looked up :

“Have you an audition too ?” he asked.

“Yes,” answered the singer, “in about twenty minutes. I am feeling awfully nervous. Is Mr. Sullivan very severe ?”

“Awful,” said the pianist. “But I’ll tell you what,” he added, “if you are feeling nervous just you try over your songs now and you will be in good form when he comes.”

They ran over some songs together until they were interrupted by a man who burst into the room and addressed the pianist as “Mr. Sullivan”. Needless to say, the young singer was engaged. Sullivan was like that.

Before concluding this chapter, I think I must tell you just one story about the late Sir Charles Wyndham. It occurred at the Garrick Club at a time when Sir Charles was playing the part of David Garrick. While visiting the Club one day he happened to sit down in a David Garrick’s chair of which the Club members are the proud possessors, and a member, thinking to flatter Sir Charles, remarked to him ; “Wyndham, you grow more like David Garrick every day.”

“Yes, old man,” replied Sir Charles, “and less like him every night.”

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

ONE cannot look back on half a century's association with the Gilbert and Sullivan operas without thinking in highly appreciative terms of Sir William Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, the brilliant creators of the operas. They were two fine British gentlemen who in their work have left us a legacy which is truly national, for nowhere will you find any music so typically English as that of Sullivan, and nowhere will you find any comedies which are so essentially British. While this is particularly true of Gilbert's lyrics, which are as mirrors held up to all of us, for he taught us to see ourselves as we really are and, having seen ourselves thus, to exercise the truly British virtue of being able to laugh at our own weaknesses. So true and accurate was he in this that the lines are ever topical; that is one reason why they will always be topical. I am no politician, but who, for instance, could not, if he were in mischievous vein, apply those lines from *Iolanthe* to the present political machine :

A brain and cerebellum too,  
They've got to leave that brain outside  
And vote just as their leaders tell 'em too ?

Or what could be more topical, particularly in view of the modern traffic congestion, the

growth of bandits, and the ever-increasing laws, than those celebrated lines from the *Pirates of Penzance* :

When the enterprising burglar's not a-burgling  
When the cut-throat isn't occupied in crime,  
He loves to hear the little brook a-gurgling,  
And listen to the merry village chime.  
When the coster's finished jumping on his mother,  
He loves to lie a-basking in the sun.  
Ah, take one consideration with another,  
The policeman's lot is not a happy one ?

In fact, I think it is true that in every one of the operas you could find at least one verse that would be topical and hit off a situation as it is to-day.

Some who knew Sir William Gilbert but superficially will tell you that he was a martinet. This may be true concerning his theatrical work, when he was under the stress and strain of rehearsals, but, apart from that, never did a natural gentleness and inborn courtesy fail to show themselves as his distinguishing qualities. Ever upright and honourable, he was that type of man who could never imagine that he could meet with an ungenerous action, a disloyal friend, or a mean colleague. And never could he stoop to these things himself ; never, I am certain, could he imagine any one of his acquaintances even thinking of doing so.

It must be admitted that he had a satirical turn, and nearly every bow shot from his arrow hit its mark. But it did no more. For his quivers had not arrows that bore poison. His shafts always

caught you in the ribs and tickled you so that you laughed. Furthermore, he was a great classical scholar, and to this undoubtedly one can attribute his remarkable command of beautiful English. One need pick out only one line of his lyrics to appreciate that he was nimble-witted in the extreme.

Yet to my personal knowledge it was his custom to spend many days shaping and re-shaping and polishing some witty fancy that would take him into phrases that satisfied his meticulous taste. I have known him spend weeks putting the finishing touches on one lyric. The result of all this labour was that every line of his that was published was perfect.

So far as the stage was concerned, I think it might be admitted that he had a perfect technique, but this too was acquired only by many hours of unrelenting labour spent at his home near Harrow, Grim's Dyke. Here he had a wonderful miniature stage at which he worked arranging just where every character should enter, where each one should stand, and exactly where and when each character should move.

For these home rehearsals he had small coloured blocks, a different colour to represent each character, and for the chorus. With these he would work for days on end literally producing an opera to perfection long before he came to the theatre, so that when he did come to the theatre for a rehearsal he had everything perfect, down to each movement of every one of the cast. It was when he had arrived at this point that he

became the martinet, so anxious was he to see his opera produced exactly as he had conceived it.

When everything else was perfect, I have known Gilbert to spend many long hours making his company practise facial expressions, tiny movements of the hands and of the feet, impressing upon them the effects these small things had upon the audience and upon the general success of the piece. A rehearsal with Gilbert was a fatiguing business, but it was invariably well worth all the painstaking which he insisted should be put into the play before the curtain went up on the first night.

Weariness occasionally overtakes one at rehearsals, and I remember on one occasion, when dullness born of this weariness had overtaken me, and I did not grasp something Gilbert was telling me, I was indiscreet enough to remark, "But I haven't done that before, Sir William."

"No," he replied tartly, "but I have."

My dullness disappeared in a flash with that one rebuke.

On another occasion during one of these rehearsals I remember he instructed an actor to sit down "in a pensive fashion". The actor sat down rather heavily and smashed the seat he used, whereupon, like a flash, Gilbert remarked, "No, no! I said pensively, not *expensively*."

So certain was Gilbert of what he wanted when he came to a theatre for rehearsal that he would seldom tolerate any interference or outside suggestion. It was George Grossmith, I think,



who once made a suggestion to him for getting a laugh.

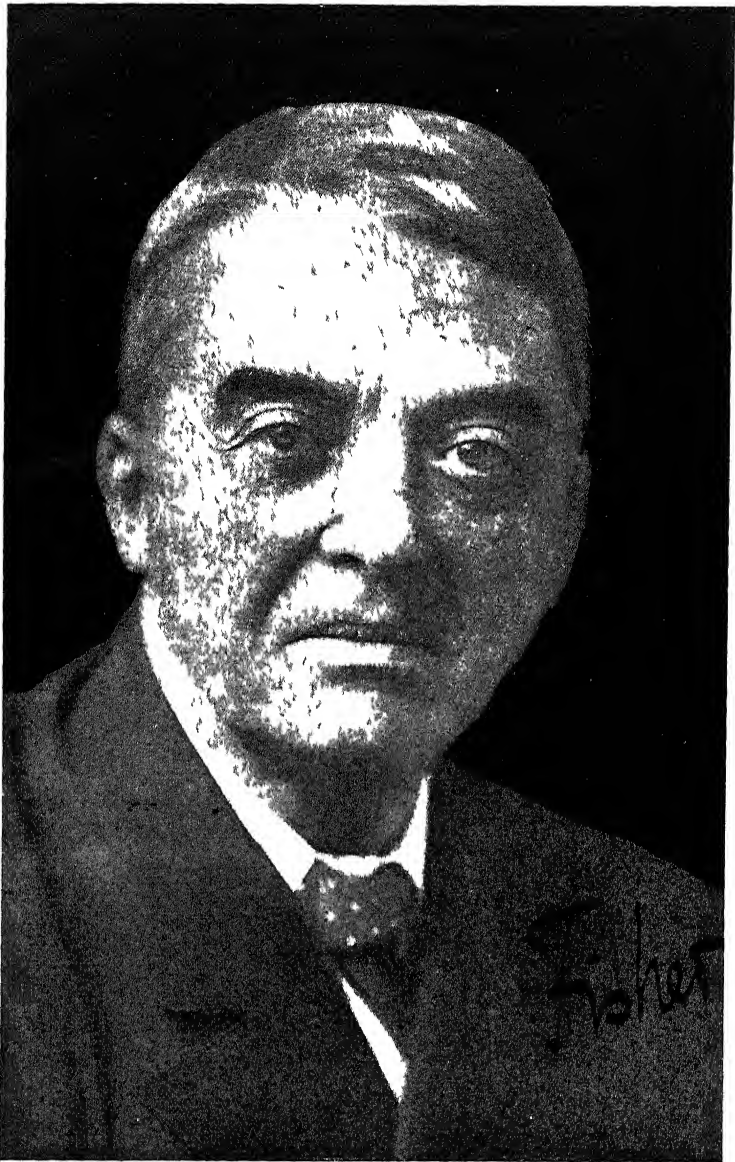
"Yes," remarked Gilbert very dryly, "that would make people laugh, but an audience would also laugh if you sat down on a pork pie!"

I often think Gilbert always had a new opera which he was about to rehearse fixed in his mind with cameolike clearness, not only with regard to exits and entrances, the positions of actors and actresses on the stage and their movements from time to time, but also concerning the colour scheme and even the dresses. He invariably laid down rules concerning the best lighting effects for each scene, and even thought out such small details as to see to it that no one who had to do much dancing ever wore a heavy dress.

Incidentally, he would never allow an alteration once he had fixed anything in his own mind and taken a decision on it. Thus it is that the operas as performed to-day are exactly as Gilbert produced them years ago.

Sir Arthur Sullivan I knew less well, but I knew him sufficiently to recognize in him a warm-hearted Irishman who was ever ready to do a good turn for anyone; who was always the epitome of modesty; and who never lost his geniality despite the fact that he suffered from almost lifelong physical pain.

One of the most remarkable, almost astounding things to me was that Sullivan could play practically every instrument in the orchestra. Not only could he do this, but when rehearsing a new piece of music which he had written he



AMONG THE THINGS I TREASURE IS A SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF  
' JACKIE ' FISHER



would frequently take up an instrument and play it to show a member of the orchestra exactly what value could be got out of a certain musical phrase. In this way he frequently introduced quaint effects into the general orchestral design.

I do not know much about music, but there is one thing about Sullivan's music which I can appreciate, and which I think every member of the public can appreciate. That is its rhythm. There is a certain trickiness in it perhaps, but once you have got it you cannot forget it. There was an occasion, I remember, when Sir Arthur was rehearsing us and we found it particularly difficult to get our songs right. We tried for a long time with little success, so I asked Sir Arthur to "la la" the rhythm to me. After he had done this, I got the measure so well that he exclaimed, "That's splendid, Lytton. If you're not a musician, I wish there were others, too, who were not."

Sullivan was always extremely modest. On the first night of a new opera he would always conduct the orchestra, but he would creep to the conductor's stand most unostentatiously and then sit down so that the audience could see little of him, explaining to the company playing in the opera, "The audience have come to see you, not me."

Speaking of first nights, what wonderful first nights they were! They have provided me with some of the most vivid memories of my life. In these days it is difficult to imagine a first night being placarded on the newspaper contents bills, but I can well remember seeing the newsboys

running down Fleet Street carrying a placard in front of them announcing, "A new Gilbert and Sullivan."

Yes, they were certainly wonderful nights, with the auditorium crammed full of the pre-war aristocracy, all genuinely thrilled with the opportunity to listen to a new Gilbert and Sullivan gem; with Sir William Gilbert waiting in the wings for us to give us generous praise and encouragement, and with Sir Arthur sitting before us in front of the orchestra, helping us on and encouraging us with his baton and with his smiles.

Great times! Wonderful to look back on.

These two great men worked together in collaboration for exactly a quarter of a century. They began in 1871, when they wrote a funny little piece called *Thespis*. This was produced at the Gaiety Theatre, and it was such a success that Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte invited them to work together again to produce a curtain-raiser which was billed and which became known as *Trial by Jury*.

From 1871 to 1889 the two worked together without a break. It was in the latter year after their most successful production of all, *The Gondoliers*, that their unfortunate "separation" came about. This lasted for four years, after which, in 1893, they came together again to give us that delightful work *Utopia Limited*. This was the twelfth work they had produced together, and in 1896, after they produced *The Grand Duke*, their thirteenth collaboration, their partnership finally finished.

Although Sullivan continued as a composer, he never found another lyric-writer to come anywhere near his old friend Gilbert. In fact I think that none since has shown the deftness or quaint turn of fancy of Gilbert.

The separation of these two men was undoubtedly a great tragedy for the British theatre and for the British public. The two men, to my knowledge, always worked extremely well together. There were, of course, occasional "breezes" between them, but never until 1889 was there any serious rift.

This, when it came, was from an almost unbelievable cause—a carpet! A new one had been ordered, and there was a quarrel over the price! While one held that it was a wild extravagance, the other declared it to be a necessity, and so after much wrangling and painful argument the partnership terminated.

When referring to two great men like Gilbert and Sullivan, one's thoughts naturally turn to a third and, in his own way, an equally great man. I refer, of course, to the late Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte. It was he who first gave me my chance to play in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and it was he who throughout many years was my staunch friend and supporter. A kinder or more generous man I never knew.

There are hundreds of actors and actresses in London, even to-day I should imagine, who can testify to his generosity. A man in his position, of course, was inevitably the object of constant appeals for work by numbers of my profession.

Every poor actor down on his luck came to Mr. D'Oyly Carte for a job. It was impossible, of course, for him to provide employment for everybody, bar in fact for more than a few, but he was a man with a kindly heart, and I don't think he ever turned a man away empty-handed.

In fact, before the war, I know that he never left his room at the Savoy without first making sure that he had a handful of half-sovereigns, knowing well that outside the theatre and in the neighbourhood of the Strand he would come across unfortunate fellows who were down on their luck, who would be sure to appeal to him for a job. For these he always had a word of kindly encouragement, and when he left them after a short chat invariably pressed a coin into their hands under cover of the handshake with the remark, "Now be sure to get yourself a good meal."

He was ever generous in this way.

It may be that few people who knew Mr. Carte knew also of his generosity, for he was a man of few words and of rather taciturn humour.

He was a great stage manager. Frequently I have seen him come into the wings, cast his eye over a setting, and see at once what minor detail was wrong. In fact his eye for stagecraft amounted to genius.

Incidentally the finest compliment I have ever had paid me for my acting came from Mr. D'Oyly Carte. It was in 1897, when I was playing Shadbolt in a London revival of *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

Hitherto big men had played this rôle, and it was impossible for a man of my small stature to play it in the same way, so I had set my own interpretation upon it and played the part as that of a creeping, cringing little dwarf. This seemed to me to be consistent with the historical figure from which the character was drawn, and after the first night Mr. D'Oyly Carte remarked to me enthusiastically, "My dear Lytton, you have given me the finest performance I have ever seen of any part on any stage."

I was so flattered by this compliment, coming as it did from a man in his position and from a man who was invariably very sparing with his praise, that I asked him to be good enough to write his opinions down for me. A few days later I received the compliment written in his own hand and over his own signature. It is one of my proudest possessions.

He was a man with a remarkable memory, but at least once he suffered from forgetfulness. I was playing in the D'Oyly Carte Company on tour, at Greenwich I think, and happened to be on a flying visit to London, when I met Mr. D'Oyly Carte in the street. We stopped to chat, and just as we were parting he remarked :

"Oh, I think I can offer you an engagement, Lytton !"

Of course, I had to point out to him that I was already playing in one of his companies, and he enjoyed the joke as much as I did.

A remarkable genius behind the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company, of whom the public seldom if



ever heard, was Miss Helen Lenoir, who, after acting as private secretary to Mr. Carte for many years, became his wife. She had an outstanding gift for organization, and there was hardly a department of the great D'Oyly Carte enterprise with which she was not familiar and which she did not help to superintend. In addition to her gift for organization she had a fine artistic taste and frequently gave just the necessary finishing touch to the dressing of a production. Frequently the New York productions were placed entirely in her charge, and the finest compliment one can pay her is to point to the success of the trans-Atlantic ventures.

When her husband died she took over the entire range of management, and did so so successfully that long before she died the operas, which had suffered a temporary eclipse, had entered upon a new lease of life which was the beginning of the prosperity which they are enjoying to this day.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

MAY I hesitate here, please, to pay a well-deserved compliment to my own wife? It was through her, the pretty Louie Henri, that I secured my first engagement. It was when I was a schoolboy of sixteen I saw her, a beautiful young actress, and I immediately fell in love with her.

Had it not been for that fact and for the fact that she too fell in love with me, it is more than likely that I should not at this moment be sitting down to write my reminiscences. Probably I should never have succeeded in joining the opera company at all and could not have looked back upon the wonderfully delightful life of fifty years as a Savoyard. In fact I shudder to think of what might have happened to me. In the early days I was anything but a success, and had it not been for the constant help and encouragement from my wife I should probably never have succeeded at all, either in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas or anywhere else on the stage.

As I have told you earlier on in my story, we went through many hardships together and she suffered extreme poverty with me without ever once complaining. Had it not been for her constant loyalty, support and encouragement, I might still have been a very poor salesman in a certain London bargain basement, for that was

one of the many jobs at which I tried my hand in order to scrape together sufficient money on which to live.

Speaking of that time reminds me of a story which I should like to tell you.

I knew nothing about the arts of salesmanship, but it so happened that whilst I was looking for work I heard that a certain big London store was commencing a sale and required a number of assistants. I applied for a job and secured it. It consisted of standing in the bargain basement in charge of a large hamper of oddments, each of which was ticketed and priced. All I had to do was to see that none of the enthusiastic customers became light-fingered and to take the money from them after they had made their choice.

That sounds very simple, but in fact I discovered it to be otherwise, and I can never be sufficiently grateful when I think of the tortures I escaped by reason of the fact that I finally succeeded on the stage.

To be a salesman in a bargain basement during sale-time needs, more courage than I should have been able to sustain for more than one sale, for when two, three, or more ladies are gathered together, each determined on a particular bargain, it is more than mere man can do to frustrate them ; it gives one the feeling of being a defenceless individual trying to stem the onrush of a victorious army.

But I am going to tell you of how I was sorely tempted to make a little illegal commission on sales. There was a great crowd round my basket

of bargains, and I was wondering how to cope with the rush, when a woman pulled me aside and handed me a bargain she had retrieved from the basket, together with a ticket which she had found on the floor. The bargain she had chosen was rather an expensive one, but the ticket she had found was marked one and elevenpence. Thrusting a half-crown into my hand the woman remarked, "That'll be all right, look. Say this is the ticket, but it had come off."

A half-crown in those days meant a tremendous lot to me, and I confess for a moment I was sorely tempted to take it and to connive in this dishonesty. It would all have been so very simple. Fortunately, however, I pulled myself together in time. I took the ticket, which had fallen to the floor, gave the woman back her half-crown and remarked coldly, "Madam, the price of that article is five shillings and sixpence."

It might have been the look in my eye or the sound of my voice, but the woman dropped her precious bargain back into the basket and fled. I felt it my duty to report the matter to the shopwalker, which I did, but I do not remember that he rewarded my honesty in any tangible form.

But to return to Lady Lytton. I have told you that I fell in love with her when I was a school-boy. I soon discovered that I was not the only schoolboy who had become a victim of her charm, for one evening when I went to the stage door to wait patiently for her I was infuriated to find a lad from my own form at school also waiting

there with a large box of chocolates under his arm.

"Where did you get those?" I asked him.

"I bought them," he declared.

"What are they?" I demanded.

"Chocolates, of course," he said.

Now, although I was very much in love, even in those days I had not sufficient pocket money with which to buy my lady-love chocolates. But I thought rapidly to myself, "If he has bought them for her, there is no earthly reason why I should not present them." It so happened that I had a bit of a reputation at school for boxing, so, snatching the chocolates, I punched the poor fellow's head very vigorously and told him unceremoniously to "hop it".

And hop it he did, leaving me with the chocolates, which I duly presented to Mademoiselle Louie Henri. Those chocolates may have been the turning-point in my career. Who can tell?

Suffice it to say that we spent a very happy time together, walking in the moonlight munching my form-mate's chocolates, and it was the outcome of that evening that caused me to join the D'Oyly Carte Company. I utilized part of the evening at least in persuading my wife-to-be to try to get me in the chorus. This she did, and I duly joined the company even though I was still supposed to be a schoolboy. I married her almost immediately, but the young newly-weds were so shy that for many months I posed in the company as her brother.

The first job I had with the company was as

an understudy to David Fisher, as King Gama. At the same time, of course, I was a chorister, and for my work I received the princely salary of two pounds a week.

Foolishly, however, I did not know how well off we really were. "Get-rich-quick" ideas came into my head, and as my progress in the company was not sufficiently rapid to suit my liking I resigned and, as I have already related, joined the famous, or infamous, Commonwealth company of strolling players. You know what fortunes and misfortunes came to us then, since I have already related them, and I have told you how I rejoined the D'Oyly Carte Company and decided never to look back again.

It would have been very difficult for me to have kept that decision had it not been for my wife. In those early days she was climbing rapidly, and many a time when I have had "candid communication" with myself I used to think that it would be Louie Henri who would become famous.

As a matter of fact, she did. It has been computed that there are three million D'Oyly Carte Opera lovers, and a large proportion of these have been delighted by her singing.

Apart from her success as an actress she has always been an accomplished musician, and in that respect I owe much to her for the way in which, during the preparation of my new rôles, she has helped me, not only by her encouragement, but in a very practical way. Many, many hours has she spent at the piano, going over my new

songs with me, correcting me here and there, and rehearsing until she was satisfied with my achievements. Incidentally, in this respect she was something of a taskmaster, never letting me down lightly and never being satisfied until I was giving of my very best.

The piano which I have at home, by the way, and on which we have practised many of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, is one which Sir Arthur Sullivan used to play over his music for *The Mikado*. It is a very beautiful satinwood grand, and was designed for Mr. D'Oyly Carte by the late Sir Alma Tademara. It was presented to me by Mrs. D'Oyly Carte. To-day its tone is as good as ever it was, and my wife and I will always look upon it as a treasured possession.

As members of the older generation of Gilbert and Sullivan opera lovers will be able to testify, Louie Henri can certainly count herself amongst the distinguished Savoyards. Before she retired, I think it is correct to say, she played a greater number of parts than any other lady connected with the company. Neither she nor I can remember all the rôles which she has played, but among them are :

<i>Trial by Jury</i>	..	..	Plaintiff
<i>The Sorcerer</i>	..	..	Constance : Mrs. Partlet
<i>H.M.S. Pinafore</i>	..	..	Josephine : Heve
<i>The Pirates of Penzance</i>			Edith
<i>Patience</i> ..	..	..	Lady Angela
<i>Iolanthe</i> ..	..	..	Iolanthe
<i>Princess's Ida</i>	..	..	Melissa

<i>The Mikado</i>	..	..	Pitti Sing
<i>Ruddigore</i>	..	..	Mad Margaret
<i>The Yeomen of the Guard</i>			Phoebe
<i>The Gondoliers</i>	..		Tessa
<i>Utopia Limited</i>	..		Nelraya
<i>The Grand Duke</i>	..		Julia

Louie Henri, I am quite certain, will be remembered by many as soprano, contralto, and soubrette, but her longest rôle and that which she has played best of all—more successfully than perhaps even I can realize—is that of my truest friend and helpmate in life.

Optimistic as I may be in temperament, there were times, as I have already told you, when I was near “touching bottom”. On these occasions only her wonderful encouragement and her wonderful courage could have pulled me through, and what success I have achieved is due in no small measure to her ; in fact as much to her as it is to me or any talent I possess.

Ours has been a wonderful partnership, for which I thank her sincerely. It is difficult for a man to find words with which to praise his wife, but I should like to pay her this compliment :

Our life together has emphasized that all I thought of her and imagined about her when I first fell in love with her has proved to be true.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

WELL, here I am almost at the end of my story, But I have a few things that I should like to say before I put down my pen. One matter I feel I must mention is the question of my retirement. So many of my friends have asked me exactly when I am retiring. Frankly, I do not know.

As long as the public wants me—which, I hope, will be a long time yet—and as long as I have the health and vitality to act, I certainly want to. On the other hand, I sincerely hope that immediately I am showing signs of beginning to bore, the public will “signify the same in the usual manner”.

Oh, wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us!

On February the fourth of next year, 1934, I shall have completed half a century on the stage, and I hope, as I said when I bade farewell to my London audiences at the Savoy Theatre recently, that when that time comes I shall be carrying my bat “not out”.

Up to the moment I have made something like fifteen thousand appearances during that period, and, without boasting of my success, I can say that they have been happy appearances. At all of them I have been fortunate enough to be

able to feel that my audience was with me—the most wonderful feeling an actor or actress can have. And, that being so, I cannot imagine anything more disconcerting or more mortifying than to outstay one's welcome and to go on in a fool's paradise. Therefore, no matter for how long or for how short a time I remain actively engaged in the theatrical profession, I do sincerely hope that my audiences will intimate to me as kindly as they can when they have had enough of me, or when I show signs that, despite all my efforts, my best has deteriorated into only a second-best.

But, frankly, I cannot contemplate retirement. While writing these reminiscences I am on a tour of the provinces where my reception in all the big cities which I have toured so frequently before—Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds and all the others—has been simply marvellous. I cannot tell you, my dear friends of the theatre, how much I thank you for the kindly reception you are continuing to give me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Certain it is, God willing, I shall continue touring until I have completed my fifty years of theatrical life. After that . . . who knows?

The intention at the moment is that I shall retire at the end of this present tour, but as I have said already, I really cannot believe it. It is more than my imagination is capable of doing to project myself, as it were, forward to the day when "the would-be, the could-be, the

might-be, the inevitable *must*” shall have arrived. I think you can understand what I feel about that.

Whatever happens I shall never say good-bye. I hate the word. Always shall my farewell be *au revoir*. It is so much pleasanter, so much kinder, and in this life we must contemplate the pleasant and the kind, although at the same time we must not be foolish like the ostrich and endeavour to bury our heads in the sand in an abortive effort to frustrate the inevitable by ignoring it.

But I fear I am becoming too serious or too sentimental. Perhaps it is because perforce, as I write these words, I am recollecting my farewell night at the Savoy Theatre, London, at the end of January last. That was a wonderful night which I shall not forget, even though I should live to be a centenarian—which I hope I shall! In my time I have played many parts, as Shakespeare says, or almost says, but never before had I played one so difficult as that which called upon me to walk on the stage at the Savoy for the last time and say *au revoir* to my London audiences.

Perhaps the biggest compliment that was ever paid me in my life was paid me on that night. I refer, in a sense of deep appreciation, and in no way in a sense of boastfulness, to the fact that something like four thousand people were unable to get into the theatre to bid me *au revoir*. To those I should like to say, “Thank you”—simple words, but sincere.

And to them also I should like to repeat the short speech which I made from the stage at the



LADY LYTON



Savoy, since it contained what I should have said to them had it been possible by some miracle to have squeezed them in with the fifteen hundred or two thousand people who were present. This is what I said then, and this is what I repeat to you now:

“My dear friends, this is the most difficult part I have ever had to play. If I fail I feel sure you will forgive me. On February the fourth, 1934, I complete my fifty years on the stage. It is a wonderful innings, and I hope to carry my bat. Before I go I want to thank you all for the way you have helped me in my work, and I also want to thank the Press for their very generous criticisms.

“I was not so lucky in America. One eminent critic wrote of me: ‘If Henry Lytton, the alleged comedian, is funny, then a funeral is a scream.’

In the words of that great master Gilbert, we have to make “the inevitable must”. The inevitable “must” has come and I have to say farewell to this beloved theatre. It is very difficult—very—and I know you will forgive me if I do not dwell on this.

“Before I go I want to thank the company for the way they have worked with me. Team work is the great secret of the success of any enterprise, particularly theatrical, and in this company you certainly have wonderful team work.

“My first words here on this stage were W. S. Gilbert’s, and Lady Gilbert, whom I am very glad to see here to-night, very often sat in the stalls when Sir William was teaching this raw recruit

how to say his wonderful lines. I didn't get much encouragement—because once when I was saying a line I rather thought I saw the joke ; so Sir William said, 'Oh, Lytton, I have no doubt you have a lot of intelligence ; will you please remember that the audience have intelligence too ?'

"It was a wonderful reb'uke, but I have never forgotten it.

"As Gilbert's lines were the first I ever spoke on this stage, I think it is only fitting that they should be my last. I am not going to say good-bye—I hate the word—but I shall say instead, *au revoir*."

In that little speech you will notice I mentioned the company. Each and all have been wonderful friends and colleagues, in fact wonderful supporters, and, paradoxically, this is another reason why, sooner or later, I must retire. A younger man whom I have already mentioned must carry on the good work. He has been awaiting his chance patiently for years to be able to play the leads which I have been fortunate enough to play for so long.

Among a very distinguished audience were a number of well-known people whom I should like to take the opportunity of thanking individually for coming to my last London show. They included Lady Gilbert, Lord Finlay, Lord Plender, Sir Noel and Lady Curtis-Bennett, Sir Thomas and Lady Polson, Sir Ernest and Lady Wild, Miss Mackintosh, Sir Harold and Lady Elverston, Dame May Whitty, Dr. and Mrs. Pollock, Mr. Derek Oldham, Mrs. Reeves Smith, Mr. J. R.

Clynes, my wife and my two daughters, Mrs. Edward Elverston and Mrs. Charles Gay.

Following the usual custom at the last night of a London Gilbert and Sullivan season, the programme was not announced until it was handed to the audience as they took their seats. Even I did not know which parts I should play until I arrived at the theatre and had to make up. In fact the programme was Act I of *The Pirates of Penzance* and Act I of *The Mikado*, interspersed with Richard Watson singing very beautifully the Sentry Song from *Iolanthe* and an orchestral pot-pourri arranged by Mr. Geoffrey Toye.

I think the most thrilling moment of the whole evening was when I had to come on from the wings for the last time to play that marvellous rôle of Ko-Ko and had to speak that line, "*I am greatly touched by this reception.*"

Like so many of the wonderful lines from these delightful operas, it might have been written specially for the occasion, and the applause with which it was greeted put my heart in my throat with gratitude. Never have I heard such applause and never has applause affected me so strangely.

Every honest actor will tell you that applause is his life blood. That is no mere conceit, for after all it is the only way an actor can tell whether he is doing his job properly. On this score I would ask you always to support stage artists by your applause if they deserve it, since it will help them to give of their best, and if it is not forthcoming it might conceivably cause an otherwise perfectly good artist to fail dismally.



But, strangely enough, this very fact which I have emphasized about the appreciation of an audience was reversed on this occasion. For just one moment I was so moved that I felt I could not go on, but fortunately I pulled myself together and remembered what I owed those wonderful people out in front, and, incidentally, those millions of people who were sitting in their homes listening on their wireless sets—for the occasion was deemed to be sufficiently interesting to warrant broadcasting by the B.B.C.

Friends told me afterwards that the applause lasted for two minutes, but to me it seemed an eternity, so full was I of feeling; almost overcome by the poignancy of the situation. To confess the truth, I had been dreading that moment. To bid farewell to friends is always a sad business, and the audiences at the Savoy had been my sincere friends for so many years that I felt I should not be able to trust myself when the moment came, and I was certain in my own mind that I should be seized with dreadful stage-fright so that I should be unable either to act or to speak.

Fortunately, however, my worst fears were not realized, and looking back on the occasion, it was not an unhappy one; in fact it is one which I shall remember with gratification.

Well, so a glorious and wonderful evening came to an end, and the curtain was lowered for the last time at the conclusion of my last performance at the Savoy. But before I could get off the stage I was surprised by another tumultuous

burst of applause. This time not only from the crowded auditorium, but also from the cast who had been playing with me and who were on the stage. They all gathered round to my support clapping vigorously, and while I was endeavouring to spot a point in the "cordon" through which I could break, the curtain went up again and I was caught in a storm of kindness—a sort of friendly barrage which came from all directions.

It is impossible for me even yet to analyse my feelings in such a way to make it possible for me to express them to you now, so I will not try. I know that I got to my dressing-room and cleaned off the grease-paint, sitting before my mirror there for the last time, and as quickly as I could changed from the rôle of Ko-Ko to that of Harry Lytton.

And so out into the street via the stage door, where another surprise was awaiting me. Hundreds of people—or so it seemed to me—had gathered outside ready to give me one long last cheer and to wish me *bon-voyage* on my provincial tour.

That tour is now well on, and at each theatre at which I have appeared my friends in all parts of the house have been unstinting in their appreciation of my humble efforts.

As I said earlier in this chapter, I hope that I shall be able to continue for a considerable time yet interpreting the wonderful lines of the operas, and doing my best in turn to show my appreciation of my wonderful and loyal friends the theatrical public.

Now it remains only for me here to say *au revoir* to you all, and in doing so I should like to strike a cheerfully philosophic note by quoting my life motto, which I have, culled from that great master Gilbert, and which I have found in my many wanderings to be a really true and reliable philosophy. Here it is :

For there is humour in all things and the truest philosophy is that which teaches us to find it and to make the most of it.

BY LADY LYTTON

IT is a woman's prerogative to have the last word. That, I suppose, is why my husband, who is always charming to the ladies, has suggested that I should write something to be included in his book. Whether my conjecture is correct or not, I was married to him a sufficient number of years ago for the word "obey" to have been fashionable in the marriage ceremony. Therefore, like a good wife, I will try to write something.

I use the word "try" only in respect to the literary aspect—not because I have nothing to say! Popular acceptance has it that a woman always has something to say. In this case I certainly have. There are so many people I should like to thank and so many things that I should like to recall with a sense of appreciation that it is difficult to know where to begin and where to finish.

Perhaps, therefore, I may be allowed to begin at the end, as it were, and say a word first of all about that wonderful last night at the Savoy. Of course I was touched, and I think it was really wonderful and tremendously kind the way so many people showed their appreciation of my husband. With some justification, I think, I felt a proud woman.

In fact, I felt very proud, but not very brave.

When my husband appeared through the curtains at the back of the stage dressed as Ko-Ko, and that wonderful storm of applause burst out from every part of the theatre, I suddenly became nervous. Not for myself, of course, but for what might happen. I knew that my husband must be feeling a tremendous strain and that he was battling with mixed feelings of joy, appreciation and sadness. So nervous was I that I felt like running out of the theatre, but I stuck it, and I am glad I did, for everything went off splendidly, and it was not altogether the sad evening that I had anticipated and feared.

There are dozens of friends I should like to thank for being present at that farewell, but it is impossible to mention them all. I feel, however, that I must mention Lady Gilbert, who was kind enough to sit in a box and show her appreciation of my husband's efforts.

Speaking of his efforts reminds me that in the very early days of our marriage, when, in fact, we were both seventeen, I remember being in the theatre while Harry was being put through his paces during his very first rehearsal with the D'Oyly Carte Company.

I shall be giving away no secret when I tell you quite frankly that I thought he was rotten! I did not tell him so at the time, because I wanted him to succeed so much that naturally I did all I could to encourage him. But I have told him since—and he agrees with me.

In fact, I did not think very much of him either as an actor or a singer right up to that time when

he had the opportunity of playing the lead in *Ruddigore* for which he had been understudying Mr. George Grossmith. Then, on that first night, I thought he was wonderful. Looking back, I still think he was, and I think that undoubtedly it was the turning-point in his career. It was a splendid opportunity for which he had been waiting for a long, long time, and he certainly took it.

I think my husband has told you that I had been on the stage for about a year before he made his first appearance as an actor. It may possibly interest you to know that I had been on the stage since just before I was sixteen, and that during my theatrical career I played with such well-known people as Florence St. John, Violet Melnotte, Haydn Coffin, Moris Marius, Kate Munroe, Henry Ashley, Henry Bracy, senr., Harry Paulton, Kate Vaughan, Kate Stanley, Frank Wyatt, and many other-old time stars.

It is more than thirty-five years since I left the stage. I did so because I found I could not attend to my home and to my children and act as well, and I felt that, much as I liked my work, the place of a wife and mother was in her home with her children.

It is to the late Sir Augustus Harris I owe the fact that I became a very happy member of the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company and remained so for many years. I recall with much appreciation how very kind Sir Augustus Harris was in releasing me from a contract while I was playing in pantomime for him at the Drury Lane Theatre

with Kate Vaughan. I told him that I had received an offer from Mr. Carte, and, realizing what a very fine opportunity it was for me, he kindly allowed me to take it. But I know perfectly well that he would not have done so had it not been for the fact that he realized the wonderful opportunity I was getting and which he was kind enough to help me to grasp.

I should like to mention my great admiration and appreciation of the late Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte. He was a wonderful man and a tremendously generous man, and I really believe that it is his generosity we have to thank for the fact that my husband has attained the success he has in the Gilbert and Sullivan operas.

Sir Henry has told you of the time when we were so penury stricken that we were living, with our first baby—my eldest girl, Ida—in a little attic just on the south side of the river. Those days were really terrible. I can recall many occasions when we could not get enough to eat and we really did not know where the next penny was coming from.

The terrible position in which we found ourselves was due in part to some sort of a mistake. There had been an understanding that my husband was to go to Berlin with a D'Oyly Carte touring company to play in some of the operas there, but for some reason or another he was not included in the company, which went off to Berlin leaving him behind. Thus we were left on our beam ends, and, I think, my husband was out of work for three months.

It was at the end of this period that he happened to meet Mr. Richard D'Oyly Carte in the Strand one day. Mr. D'Oyly Carte, always kind as ever, stopped my husband and remarked :

"Hullo, Lytton, my boy. You're not looking too well."

"I'm not feeling too well," my husband told him.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte was immediately concerned.

"Why," he exclaimed, "what's the matter? You look pinched and drawn."

"I suppose I am," my husband admitted. "The fact is I have been out of work for a long time and I am living in one room with my wife and baby, and things are not too comfortable or rosy. I thought I was going to Berlin, but the company went off without me."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Carte, pressing a half-sovereign into his hand. "Here, take this! Buy a good meal and take it home to your wife, and report at the stage door of the Savoy to-night."

So saying, he shook my husband warmly by the hand and hurried off lest my husband should embarrass him by thanking him.

Harry reported at the stage door that evening as instructed, and that is how he came to rejoin the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company after a period of very alarming vicissitude.

That undoubtedly was the turning-point in our careers, and neither Sir Henry nor I can be sufficiently grateful for the helping hand which Mr. Carte gave us that evening when he met my



husband in the Strand, a helping hand which was extended at the very moment when it was most needed.

I have been asked in what manner I anticipate my husband's retirement. My answer to that question is that I can neither anticipate it nor imagine it. Having become accustomed to my husband going out to the theatre at least once, and sometimes twice, a day, for six days a week, and for forty-eight weeks of the year, it seems impossible that he should suddenly cease to do that.

Of one thing I am certain: he would never be content to settle down to a life of retirement in the ordinary sense. He is much too active and "full of beans" for that. If he does give up his Gilbert and Sullivan stage work and maintains his health—as I hope and trust indeed he will—he could not possibly come home and sit down quietly by the fire, as it were, and lead an arm-chair life. That would most certainly kill him.

Through hating the thought of his retirement, I suppose, we have not discussed it together in any detail, but I should not be surprised if, when the time comes that he must leave the stage and his beloved Gilbert and Sullivan operas, he took up film acting. I think he would like it, since he is tremendously interested in the technique of the films, and he could so arrange it so that he remained actively interested in the theatre, as it were, but secured more rest than he does now.

Incidentally, since I retired from the stage I have been engaged in film work, and I have

found it extremely interesting. I turned to it as a matter of interest after my family had grown up, and, like all old "stagers", I felt the call of the boards and grease paint.

One big film I made was called *Sixty Years a Queen*. It was a story of the life of Queen Victoria, and I was much honoured by being given the opportunity of playing the rôle of the old queen. The picture was made at Ealing, but it was a good many years ago, in the days of the old silent pictures.

I have never made a talkie, but perhaps one day I shall. It would be rather interesting, I think, when my husband has retired from his stage work, if we could arrange to make a film together. That, however, is merely a passing thought which we have not even discussed together.

Reading over what I have written, I seem to have been jotting down little things here and there almost at random. Nevertheless, I hope you will find them of some little interest.

Before I put down my pen I should like to write just a word or two about that romantic phrase which one hears spoken so frequently nowadays—the "good old days".

Looking backwards through more than half a century I can recall days, even weeks and years, that were certainly good in the best sense of the word. In fact I have nothing but a sense of appreciation, gratitude and satisfaction.

But speaking purely in a theatrical sense I think there were never such things as "good old days". The art of the theatre and the architecture

of the theatre have both improved even during the past twenty-five years so tremendously that they bear no comparison with the period during which I was on the stage. The young men and the young women on the stage to-day are tremendously better actors and actresses than those of my youth.

In fact I would go so far as to say that if the people who were stars in the theatrical firmament fifty years ago came back to the stage to-day and acted in the same way as they did then, the public would not tolerate them.

Of course there are exceptions to every rule, and undoubtedly there are great names of both men and women that one could mention to contradict this assertion. To that I reply that such names would be the exception and that they would merely prove the correctness of my opinion.

The whole profession from top to bottom, from stars to chorus, is immeasurably better from both a cultural and an artistic point of view. The theatre has been "accepted" by the great mass of the public, and it has gone on progressing all the time.

No one, I suppose, would disagree with my claim that the theatre has improved architecturally. To-day even the comparatively modest provincial theatre is a nice-looking, well-furnished, well-ventilated and well-lighted building. Not so very many years ago even those theatres which were looked upon as the best were lit by gas, were badly ventilated and extremely uncomfortable, both for the audiences and for the actors and actresses.

However, that is merely an opinion expressed by the way. I mention it not as a criticism of those fine old actors and actresses who entertained their great public, but as part of my general appreciation of people and things as they are to-day.

I suppose I can claim with some justification to be an actress of the old school, and it is as such that I acknowledge the progress which my own profession is making. May the members of it continue to progress, and may the members of the public find more and more genuine and artistic entertainment when they go to the theatre.

Since I have mentioned the old-time actors, may I conclude this little "ramble" by quoting (in reference to my husband and myself) and slightly adapting a famous song which a deservedly famous old actor used to sing, "*We've been together now for fifty years and it don't seem a day too much*"?

Perhaps when my husband really does retire we shall be together more than we have been in the past half-century, for he will not have to run off on provincial tours continuously. That to me will be a great joy, for, truth to tell, much as I love the stage, much as I love the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and much as I appreciate the very kind reception the theatre-going public has always accorded my husband, I shall be very happy to get him a little more to myself.

There is nothing I enjoy more than looking after Harry Lytton.



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